

PIERRE ET JEAN

(PETER AND JOHN)

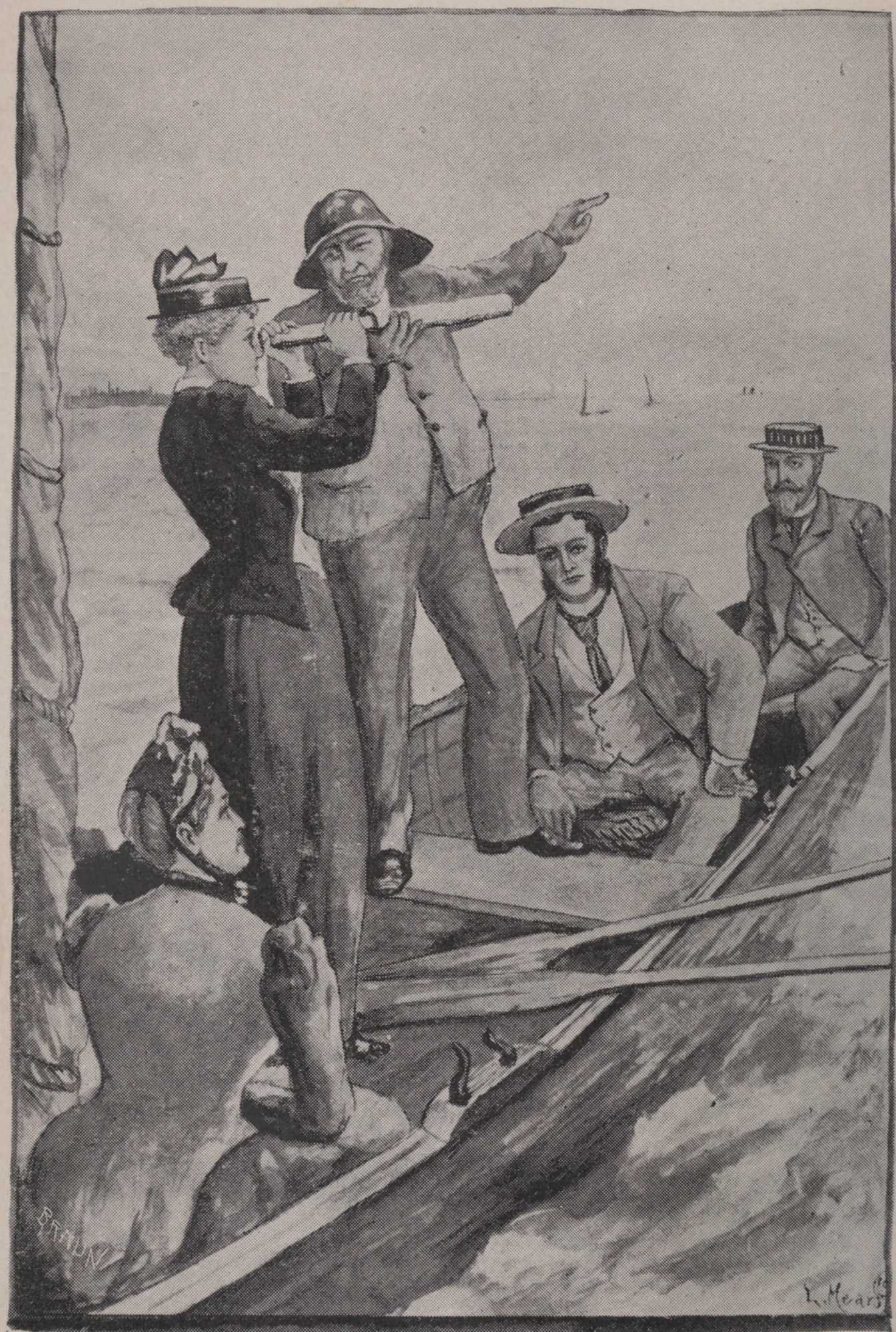
BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT



CHICAGO:
LAIRD & LEE, PUBLISHERS

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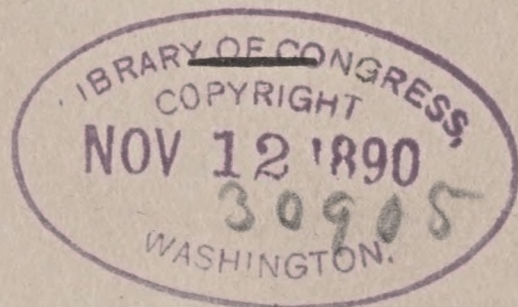
GUY DE MAUPASSANT

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

ALEXINA LORANGER



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INTRODUCTION.

“THE NOVEL.”

I have no intention of pleading here for the little novel that follows. On the contrary, the ideas that I shall endeavor to make plain, may rather attract criticism on the style of psychological study which I have undertaken in *Pierre and Jean*.

I wish to give my attention to the novel in general.

I am not the only one to whom the same reproach has been addressed by the same critics, each time a new book has appeared.

In the midst of eulogistic phrases, I invariably find this one from the same pens:

“The greatest fault of this work is that, properly speaking, it is not a novel.”

We might reply to this by the same argument:

“The greatest fault of the writer who does me the honor of judging my work is that he is not a critic.”

What, in fact, are the essential characteristics of the critic?

He must, without prejudices, without preconceived opinions, without the ideas of any particular school, without connections with any class of artist, understand, distinguish and explain the most adverse tendencies, the most contrary temperaments, and admit the most diversified researches of art.

The critic who, after *Manon Lescaut*, *Paul and Virginie*, *Don Quixote*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Werther*, the *Elective Affinities*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, *Emile*, *Candide*, *Cinq-Mars*, *Reni*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Mauprat*, *le Père Goriot*, *la Cousine Bette*, *Colomba*, *Le Rouge et le Noir*, *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, *Notre Dame de Paris*, *Salamambo*, *Madame*

Bovary, *Adolphe*, *M. de Camors*, *L'Assommoir*, *Sappho*, etc., still dares to write: "This is a novel and that is not," seems to me endowed with a perspicacity that very much resembles incompetency.

Generally this critic understands a novel, as consisting of an adventure more or less probable, arranged in the style of a drama in three acts; the first containing the exposition, the second the action, and the third the denouement.

This style of composition is perfectly admirable on condition that all others should be accepted as well.

Do any rules for writing a novel exist, outside of which a written narrative should bear another name?

If *Don Quixote* is a novel, is *Le Rouge et le Noir* another? If *Monte Cristo* is a novel, is *L'Assommoir* one also? Can a comparison be established between the *Elective Affinities* of Goethe, the *Three Musketeers* of Dumas, *Madame Bovary* by Flaubert, *M. de Camors* by M. O.

Feuillet and *Germinal* by M. Zola? Which of these works is a novel? What are those famous rules? Whence do they come? Who established them? In virtue of what principle, of what authority, and of what course of reasoning?

It appears, however, that these critics know in a sure and indubitable manner what constitutes a novel, and what distinguishes it from another work which is not one. This signifies simply that, without being producers, they have a leaning toward one school, and that they reject, as novelists themselves do, all the works conceived and executed outside of their own esthetics.

An intelligent critic should, on the contrary, seek for everything that least resembles the novels already written, and induce young authors to venture into new paths as much as possible.

All writers, Victor Hugo, as well as M. Zola, have persistently claimed the abso-

lute and indisputable right of composing, that is, to imagine or observe, according to their personal conception of art. Talent comes of originality, which is a special manner of thinking, seeing, understanding and judging. Now, the critic who pretends to define the novel according to the ideas he has formed from his favorite novels, and to establish certain invariable rules of composition, will always combat the genius of an artist who introduces a new style. A critic who would truly deserve the name should be simply an analyst without tendencies, without preferences, without passions, and, like a judge in painting, should take note only of the artistic value of the object of art submitted to him. His comprehension, open to everything, should so completely absorb his personality that he could appreciate and even praise the very books which, as a man, he does not like, but which he should understand as a judge.

But most critics are, after all, only

readers, and the result is, that they often find fault without reason, or praise us without reserve and without measure.

The reader, who seeks in a book merely to satisfy the natural tendencies of his mind, demands that the writer should respond to his predominating taste, and invariably qualifies as remarkable or *well written*, the work wherein he finds the passage that pleases his idealistic, gay, jovial, sad, dreamy, or positive imagination.

In fact, the public is composed of numerous groups, who cry out to us:

“Console me.”

“Amuse me.”

“Sadden me.”

“Move me.”

“Make me dream.”

“Make me tremble.”

“Make me weep.”

“Make me think.”

A few superior minds alone ask of the artist:

“Make us something beautiful, in whatever form you wish, according to your temperament.”

The artist tries, succeeds or fails.

The critic should appreciate the result only according to the nature of the effort, and he has no right to consider the tendencies.

This has already been written a thousand times, but it must be repeated again.

After the literary schools, which have endeavored to give us a deformed, superhuman, poetic, tender, charming or superb vision of life, has come a realistic or naturalistic school, which professes to show us the truth, nothing but the truth and the whole truth.

We must admit, with equal interest, these theories of art, that differ so widely, and judge the works they produce solely from the point of view of their artistic value, by accepting, *a priori*, the general ideas which gave them birth.

To contest the right of a writer to pro-

duce a poetic or a realistic work, is to wish to force him to modify his temperament, to challenge his originality, to not permit him to use the eye and intelligence which nature has given him.

To reproach him of seeing things, beautiful or ugly, small or heroic, graceful or sinister, is to reproach him of being conformed in such or such manner, and of not having a vision concurrent with our own.

Let us leave him free to understand, to observe, to conceive as he pleases, provided he is an artist. Let us become poetically exalted to judge an idealist, and let us prove to him that his dream is mediocre, common-place, not sufficiently foolish or magnificent; but, if we judge a naturalist, let us show him where the difference lies between truth in life and truth in books.

It is evident that schools so different must use absolutely contrary methods of compositions

The novelist who transforms the constant, brutal, and displeasing truth, to draw from it an exceptional and stirring adventure, without perceptibly exaggerating probability, must manipulate events at his will, and prepare and arrange them to please and move the reader. The plan of his novel is but a series of ingenious combinations leading adroitly to the denouement. The incidents are disposed and graduated toward the culminating point and final effect, which is a capital and decisive event, satisfying all the curiosities awakened at the beginning, placing a barrier to further interest, and terminating the related narrative so completely, that we feel no desire to know what will become of the most interesting personages on the morrow.

The novelist who, on the contrary, pretends to give us an exact picture of life, must carefully avoid all series of events that might appear exceptional. His aim is, not to relate a narrative to

amuse or rouse our sympathies, but to force us to think, to understand the deep and hidden meaning of events. By dint of having seen and meditated, he looks on the universe, things, facts, and men in a certain way peculiar to him, and which is the result of the *ensemble* of his observations and mature reflections. It is that personal vision of the world, which he tries to communicate to us by reproducing it in a book. To move us, as he himself has been, by the spectacle of life, he must reproduce it before our eyes with a scrupulous exactness. He must, therefore, compose his work in a manner so skillful, so dissimulated, and of so simple an appearance, that it is impossible to perceive and indicate the plan, or discover his intentions.

Instead of planning an adventure and developing it in such a manner as to render it interesting to the denouement, he will take his personage or personages at a certain period of their existence, and

conduct them by natural transitions to the following period. He will, in that manner, indicate how the mind is modified under the influence of surrounding circumstances, or how sentiments and passions are developed; how we love or hate; how we combat in all social centers; how business interests, money interests, family or political interests, continually struggle against each other.

The hability of his plan will, therefore, consist, not in the emotion or the charm, in an attractive beginning or in an exciting catastrophe, but in the skillful grouping of constant little facts, from which the definitive sense of the work will disengage itself. If ten years of life require three hundred pages to show its particular and characteristic significance in the midst of the beings that surrounded it, he must know how to eliminate from the innumerable and daily small occurrences, all those that are useless, and place in a strong light, in a special manner, all

those that would have remained unseen by less keen-sighted observers, and which give to his book its weight and value.

We understand that such a manner of composing, so different from the old process visible to all eyes, often misleads the critic, and he fails to discover all the fine, secret and invisible threads employed by certain modern artists, instead of the unique cord called "Plot."

In brief, if the "Novelist" of yesterday chose and related the crisis of life, the painful states of soul and heart, the novelist of to-day writes the history of the heart, of the soul, and of the intelligence in their normal state. To produce the effect aimed at, that is, the emotion of simple reality, and to disengage the artistic teachings that he wishes to draw from it, that is, the revelation of what is really the contemporaneous man before his eyes, he must employ facts of irrefutable and incontestable truth only.

But, in placing ourselves at the same

point of view as these realistic artists, we should discuss and contest their theory, which may be summed up in these words: "Nothing but the truth, and the whole truth."

Their intention being to disengage the philosophy of certain constant and current facts, they must often alter those events to the advantage of probability and to the detriment of truth, for *Le vrai peut quelque fois n'être pas vraisemblable*. The realist, if he be an artist, will endeavor, not to show us the commonplace photography of life, but to give us the vision more complete, more striking, more convincing than reality itself.

To relate everything would be impossible, for it would require at least one volume for each day, to enumerate the multitude of insignificant incidents that fill up our existence.

A choice is thus imposed,—this is the first stroke at the theory of the whole truth.

Life, moreover, is composed of things, the most different, the most unforeseen, the most contradictory, and the most incongruous; it is brutal, without sequel, without links, full of inexplicable catastrophes, illogical and contradictory, which should be classed in the chapter of *miscellaneous facts*.

This is why the artist, having chosen his theme, will take from this life, encumbered by hazard and futilities, only the characteristic details, useful to his subject, and reject all the rest.

Let us take one example among a thousand. The number of people who die each day, through accident, is considerable in the world. But can we make a tile fall on the head of the principal personage, or throw him under the wheels of a carriage in the middle of a narrative, under the pretext that we must furnish an accident?

Life, moreover, leaves everything in the same conditions, precipitates facts or

drags them on indefinitely. Art, on the contrary, consists in using precautions and preparations, in managing clever and dissimulating transitions, in placing in full light, by the mere tact of the composition, the essential events, and to give to the others the suitable degree of relief, according to their importance, to produce the profound sensation of the special truth that we wish to demonstrate.

To make truth, therefore, consists in giving the complete illusion of truth, according to the ordinary logic of facts, and not to servilely transcribe them in the pell-mell of their succession.

I conclude, therefore, that talented realists ought rather to call themselves illusionists.

What childishness, moreover, to believe in reality since we each carry our own in our thoughts and in our organs. Our eyes, our ears, our sense of smell, our different tastes, create as many realities as there are men in the world. And

our minds, which receive the instructions of these diversely impressed organs, understand, analyze and judge, as if each of us belonged to a different race.

Each of us, therefore, simply creates for himself an illusion of the world, a poetic, sentimental, joyous, melancholic, filthy or lugubrious illusion, according to his nature. And the writer has no other mission than to faithfully reproduce this illusion, with all the tactics of art which he has learned, and of which he can dispose.

Illusion of the beautiful, which is a human convention! Illusion of the ugly, which is a changing opinion! Illusion of the real, never immutable! Illusion of the ignoble, which attracts so many beings! The great artists are those who impose on humanity their particular illusions.

We should, therefore, never become angry against any theory, since each of them is simply the generalized expression of a temperament which is analyzing itself.

There are two in particular, which have often been discussed by opposing one to the other, instead of admitting the one and the other—that of the novel of pure analysis, and that of the objective novel. The partisans of analysis demand that the writer should undertake to indicate the least evolutions of the mind, and all the most secret motives that determine our actions, while according to the fact itself only a secondary importance.

It is the objective point, a simple limit, the pretext of the novel. According to their theory we should write those precise and dreamy works, wherein imagination confounds itself with observation, in the manner of a philosopher compiling a psychological treatise, exposing the causes by taking them from their most distant origin, giving all the “whys” of all the impulses, and discerning all the reactions of the soul, acting under the impulsion of interests, passions or instincts.

The partisans of objectivity (what a

vile word) pretend, on the contrary, to give us the exact representation of what takes place in life, carefully avoiding all complicated explanations, all dissertations on motives, and limiting themselves to bringing before our eyes the personages and events.

For them, psychology should be hidden in the book, as it is hidden in reality under the facts of existence.

The novel conceived in that manner gains in interest, in movement, in color and in liveliness.

Thus, instead of explaining at length the state of mind of the personage, the objective writers seek the action or gesture which a man in a determined situation would inevitably accomplish in that particular state of mind. And they make him conduct himself, from one end of the volume to the other, in such a manner that all his actions, all his movements, may be the reflection of his inner-self, of all his thoughts, of all his impulses or of

all his hesitations. Thus, they hide, instead of exposing, the psychology, making it the carcass of the work, as the invisible frame-work of bone is the carcass of the human body. The artist who paints our portrait does not show our skeleton.

It also seems to me, that the novel executed in this manner gains in sincerity. It is, to begin with, more lifelike, for the people whom we see moving around us do not tell us what motives they are obeying.

We must, then, take into account that if, by dint of observing men, we can determine their nature with sufficient accuracy to foresee the manner in which they would act in almost all circumstances, if we can say with precision: "Such a man of such temperament in such a case would do this," it does not follow that we could determine, one by one, all the secret evolutions of his thoughts; all the mysterious solicitations of his instinct, which are not similar to our own; all the confused inci-

tations of his nature, the organs, the nerves, the flesh and the blood of which differ from our own.

Whatever may be the genius of a weak, gentle, passionless man, devoted solely to science and work, he can never transport himself completely enough in the soul and body of an exuberant, sensual and violent man, carried away by his desires, and even by his vices, to understand and indicate the impulses and secret sensations of a being so different, even though he can foresee and relate all the actions of his life.

In brief, he who writes pure psychology can only substitute himself for all his personages in the different situations in which he places them, for it is impossible for him to change his organs, which are the sole intermediaries between exterior life and ourselves, imposing on us their perceptions, determining our sensibilities and creating in us a soul essentially different from all those that sur-

round us. Our vision, our knowledge of the world, acquired by the help of our senses, our ideas on life, can only be transported in part into all the personages whose inner and unknown nature we pretend to unveil. It is, then, always ourselves whom we depict under the guise of a king, of an assassin, a thief or an honest man, of a courtesan or a nun, of a young girl or a market-woman, for we are obliged to place the problem thus: If I were a king, an assassin, a thief, a courtesan, a nun, a young girl or a market-woman, what would I do, what would I think, how would I act? We, therefore, diversify our personages merely by changing the age, sex, social situation and all the circumstances in the life of that "self" whom nature has surrounded with an impassable barrier of organs.

The skill consists in hiding this "*self*" from the reader under all the divers masks that serve to hide it.

But if, from the point of view of com-

plete exactitude, the pure psychological analysis is contestable, it may, nevertheless, produce works of art as beautiful as any other method of work. To-day we have the symbolists. Why not? Their artistic dream is respectable, and what is particularly interesting in them is, that they know and proclaim the extreme difficulty of art.

In fact, one must be very foolish, very audacious, very conceited or very stupid to write nowadays. After so many masters of such varied natures, of such manifold genius, what is left to do that has not been done, what is left to say that has not been said? Who amongst us can boast of having written a page, a phrase, that can not be found, almost the same, somewhere else. When we read, we, so saturated with French writings that our entire body gives us the impression of being a dough made of words, do we ever find a line, a thought, which is not famil-

iar, of which we have not, at least, a confused presentiment?

The man who only seeks to amuse his readers by means already known, writes with confidence—in the candor of his mediocrity—works destined for the ignorant and idle crowd. But they on whom weigh all the past ages of literature, they whom nothing satisfies, whom everything disgusts, because they dream of something higher, to whom everything seems already despoilt, whose works always give them the impression of a useless and common labor, conclude by judging literary art as a mysterious and indiscernable thing, which a few pages from the great masters scarcely unveil to us.

Twenty verses, twenty phrases, read at once thrill us to the heart like a surprising revelation; but the verses that follow resemble all other verses, the prose that flows after it resembles all other prose.

Men of genius are, no doubt, free from

these anxieties and torments, because they carry within them an irresistible creative force. They do not judge themselves. The others, we, who are simply tenacious and conscientious workers, can struggle against invincible discouragement only by continued efforts.

Two men by their simple and luminous teachings have given me this force, of always attempting — Louis Bouilhet and Gustave Flaubert.

If I speak of them and of myself here, it is that their advice, summed up in a few lines, may perhaps be useful to some young men who are less confident in themselves than beginners in literature usually are.

Bouilhet — whom I knew first, somewhat intimately, about two years before I gained the friendship of Flaubert — by dint of repeating to me that a hundred verses, perhaps less, sufficed to make the reputation of an artist, provided they are irreproachable, and contain the essence

of talent and the originality of a man, even of the second order, made me understand that continual work and profound knowledge of the *métier* can, on a day of lucidity, of power and impulse, by the happy meeting of a subject concurring with the tendencies of our mind, give birth to a short work, unique and as perfect as we can produce.

I then understood, that the best known writers have seldom left more than one volume, and that, before all, we must have that chance of finding and discerning, in the midst of the multitude of matters presented to our choice, that which will absorb all our faculties, all our talent, all our artistic power.

Later, Flaubert, whom I sometimes met, took a liking to me. I ventured to submit a few essays to him. He kindly read them, and said: "I do not know if you have talent. What you have shown me proves that you have a certain degree of intelligence, but do not forget this,

young man, that talent—to quote the words of Buffon—is merely long patience. Work!”

I did work, and returned to him frequently, understanding that I pleased him, for he laughingly called me his disciple.

For seven years I wrote verses, I wrote stories, I wrote novels, I even wrote a detestable drama. Of all this nothing remains. The master read all, then at breakfast the following Sunday, developed his criticism and impressed on me, little by little, two or three principles which are the total of his long and patient teachings. “If we have an originality, he said, we must before all disengage it; if we have none, we must acquire one.”

“Talent is a long patience.” We must look on what we wish to express long enough and with enough attention to discover an aspect that has not been seen and portrayed by another. There is, in everything, something unexplored, be-

cause we always use our eyes with the recollection of what has been thought before on the subject we are contemplating. The least thing contains something of the unknown. Let us find it. To describe a fire that flames and a tree in a field, we must remain facing that fire and that tree until they no longer resemble, to us, any other tree or fire.

This is the way we became original.

Having, moreover, impressed upon me that there is not, in the entire world, two grains of sand, two flies, two hands, or two noses absolutely alike, he forced me to describe in a few phrases, a being or an object in a manner that would clearly particularize it and distinguish it from all the other beings or all the other objects of the same race or of the same species.

“When you pass a grocer sitting at his door,” he would say to one, “a janitor smoking his pipe, a cab-stand, show me that grocer and that janitor, their attitude, all their physical appearance, indicate by

the skill of the picture, all their moral nature, in such a manner that I cannot confound them with any other grocer or any other janitor, and let me see by a single word in what the cab-horse differs from the fifty others that follow and precede it."

I have developed, elsewhere, his ideas on style. They are closely connected with the theory of observation that I have just explained.

Whatever may be the thing we wish to say, there is but one word to express it, one verb to animate it, and but one adjective to qualify it. We must, then, seek until we have discovered this word, this verb, and this adjective, and never be content with *very nearly*, never have recourse to artifice, however dexterous, or to buffooneries of language to avoid difficulty.

We can interpret and indicate the most subtle things by applying this line of Boileau:

“Dun mot mis en sa place enseigna le pouvoir.”

There is no necessity for the odd, complicated, limitless and Chinese vocabulary, which is imposed on us nowadays under the name of artistic writing, to impress all the shades of thought; but we must discern with an extreme lucidity, all the modifications of the value of a word according to the place it occupies. Let us have fewer nouns, verbs and adjectives of almost indiscernible meaning, but more of different phrases, diversely constructed, ingeniously turned, full of sonority and clever rhythms. Let us strive to be excellent stylists, rather than mere collectors of rare terms.

It is, in fact, more difficult to turn the phrase at our will, to make it say everything, even what it does not express, to fill it with hidden meanings, secret and not formulated intentions, than to invent new expressions, or seek in the depths of old forgotten books all those which have

lost their use and signification, and which are for us like dead verbs.

The French language, moreover, is a pure water which affected writers never have and never can trouble. Each century has thrown into this limpid current, its styles, its pretentious archaïsme, and its preciousities, and nothing of these useless attempts, of these powerless efforts now survive. The nature of this is to be clear, logical and nervous. It does not allow itself to be weakened, obscured or corrupted.

Those who to-day draw characters, without attention to abstract terms, those who pour rain or hail on the *cleanness* of window panes, can also cast stones at the simplicity of their fellow-laborers! They may, perhaps, strike their *confrères*, who have a body, but they cannot reach simplicity, which has none.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

La Guillette, Étretat, September, 1887.

PIERRE ET JEAN

CHAPTER I.

“ZUT!” suddenly cried old Roland, furiously drawing in his line over the bow of the boat, where he had sat motionless for over a quarter of an hour, with his eyes fixed intently on the waters. “Not even a bite since noon.”

“Well! Well! Gerome!” exclaimed Madame Roland, starting up from her nap in the stern of the boat, where she was seated beside Mme. Rosémilly, who had been invited to this fishing party.

“They don’t bite any more,” growled the old man, impatiently. “Men should always go fishing by themselves; it takes women too long to get ready.”

His two sons, Pierre and Jean, who were seated, one on the larboard, and the other on the starboard side, each

with a line rolled around his index finger, laughed boisterously at their father's impatience, while Jean called out to him:

"You are not very flattering to our guest, father."

"I beg your pardon, Madame Rosémilly," stammered the old man, confusedly, "but I am made that way. I invite ladies because I enjoy their company, and then, as soon as I feel the water under me, I only think of fishing,"

"You have, nevertheless, quite a number of fine fish," murmured Mme. Roland, now fully awakened, and looking tenderly at the vast expanse of sky and water.

But her husband shook his head negatively, casting, however, a satisfied look at the basket in which the fish captured by the three men were still palpitating with life; their extended fins and the soft noise of their slippery scales as they came in contact, giving evidence of their powerless and feeble efforts to escape from the deadly atmosphere.

Old Roland placed the basket between his knees, tipped it forward to see those in the bottom, thereby increasing their agonizing struggles; and a strong odor from their bodies, mingled with the wholesome smell of sea water, came up from the well-filled basket.

The old fisherman inhaled this delightedly, as if they were roses, and exclaiming:

“How nice and fresh they are!” then continued: “How many did you catch, Doctor?”

“Oh! not many; three or four only,” replied Pierre, his elder son, a man of thirty, with black side whiskers, trimmed like those of a magistrate, and without moustache or imperial.

“And you, Jean?” he asked, turning to his younger son.

Jean, a tall fair-haired young man, with thick whiskers, and much younger than his brother, smiled as he murmured: “About as many as Pierre, four or five.”

They repeated this lie each time they went out fishing with their father, who was thus easily convinced that he was the most skillful of fishermen, and was delighted beyond measure.

“I will never again try to fish after noon,” he declared, as he finished rolling his line about an oar; and then folding his arms, he added, impressively: “After ten o’clock it is a waste of time, the rascals will not bite, but just lie there and bask in the sun.”

And the old man looked around him on the sea, with a satisfied air of proprietorship.

M. Roland was a retired Parisian jeweler, whom an inordinate love for sailing and fishing, had torn from the counter as soon as he had amassed a modest competency.

He settled at Havre, purchased a yacht, and became an amateur sailor. His two sons, Pierre and Jean, remained in Paris to continue their studies, coming

from time to time during their holidays, to share their father's pastime.

After leaving college, Pierre, who was five years older than Jean, had been successively attracted toward various professions, and had tried half a dozen, one after the other, but soon gave them up in disgust, to dash himself into new hopes.

Finally, he adopted the study of medicine, and worked with so much ardor that he had just received the title of doctor, after a very short course of studies, having obtained a dispensation of time from the minister. He was excitable, intelligent, changeable and tenacious ; his mind filled with chimeras and philosophical ideas.

Jean, who was as fair as his brother was dark, as calm and sweet-tempered as he was hasty and resentful, had quietly settled down to the study of law, and had obtained his diploma as a lawyer, at the same time that Pierre had received his as a doctor.

Both were now at home for a few

weeks of rest, with the intention of, perhaps, remaining at Havre, if satisfactory arrangements could be made.

But a vague jealousy; one of those slumbering jealousies that grow almost invisibly between brothers or sisters until their maturity, and bursts forth on the occasion of a marriage, or at some unexpected good fortune befalling one of them, had kept alive a fraternal and inoffensive enmity. They loved, but suspected each other. Pierre, who was five years of age when Jean was born, had looked, with the hostility of a spoilt child, on this little being that had so suddenly appeared in the arms of his father and mother, and was so loved and caressed by them.

From infancy, Jean had been a model of gentleness and good humor; and, little by little, Pierre had become irritated at the incessant praises bestowed on this overgrown boy, whose gentleness and

good nature seemed but pusillanimity and stupidity.

His parents, easy-going people who dreamed of mediocre but honorable positions for their sons, reproached his indecisions and enthusiasms, his abortive attempts and his useless impulses toward liberal ideas and decorative professions.

Since he had attained manhood they no longer said: "Look at Jean and imitate him!" but each time that he heard them repeat: "Jean has done this," or "Jean has done that," he well understood the allusions hidden in their words.

Their mother, an economical, orderly woman, a little sentimental, and gifted with the tender heart of a *bourgeoise*, tried continually to appease the little rivalries born each day between her sons, and which sprung from the ordinary details of their every-day life. A slight event, moreover, just now troubled her tranquillity, and she feared a complication. During the previous winter, while her

sons were still pursuing their studies in Paris, she had formed the acquaintance of Mme. Rosémilly, the widow of a sea captain who had died at sea two years before.

Mme. Rosémilly was twenty-three years of age, an excellent woman, who knew the world through instinct, as if she had seen and undergone, understood and weighed all possible contingencies, judging everything with a strict and clear perception. She had become a frequent visitor at the home of the Rolands, where she betook herself and her embroidery almost every evening, to chat over a cup of tea.

M. Roland's love of maritime subjects incessantly incited him to question their new friend about the departed captain, and she spoke of him, of his voyages, and his sailor's yarns without embarrassment, and like a reasonable and resigned woman, who loves life and respects the dead.

On their return, the two sons, finding this pretty widow installed in the house, had at once began to court her, not so much through the desire of wooing her as through the wish of supplanting each other.

Their prudent and practical mother sincerely hoped that one of them should win her, as the young woman was rich; but at the same time she hoped, also, the other would not be grieved.

Mme. Rosémilly was a blonde, with blue eyes, a profusion of fluffy hair that waved in the lightest breeze, and an air of boldness and impudence that ill-accorded with the methodical wisdom of her judgment.

She already seemed to prefer Jean, attracted to him by a similarity of nature. This preference, however, showed itself only in an almost imperceptible difference in the voice and look, and in that she sometimes took his advice

She seemed to guess beforehand that Jean's opinion would fortify her own,

while the opinion of Pierre would always differ fatally. When she spoke to the Doctor about his political, artistic, philosophical, or moral ideas, she would refer to them as "Your idle trash." He would then look at her with the cold look of a magistrate who instigates a suit against women, all women—those poor beings.

Before the return of his sons, old Roland had never invited her or his wife to take part in his fishing excursions, for he loved to set off before daybreak with Captain Beausire, a retired sea captain, whom he met one day while watching the rising tide, and who had since become an intimate friend. Their only companion was Papagris, an old sailor, surnamed Jean Bart, who had charge of the yacht.

But one evening of the preceding week, Madame Rosémilly, who was dining with the Rolands, had remarked that "fishing must be a very pleasant pastime, indeed." And the old jeweler, flattered in his ruling passion, and seized

with the desire of communicating it, and making converts in his belief, had exclaimed:

“Would you like to come?”

“Why, yes, I would, indeed;” replied the young widow, smiling.

“Tuesday next?” he asked, eagerly.

“Yes, Tuesday next,” she assented.

“You must be ready to start at five o’clock in the morning,” he declared.

“Oh! why that is impossible!” she exclaimed, in horror.

The old man was disappointed, and began suddenly to doubt her fancy for the sport.

“What time will you be ready?” he asked, his ardor somewhat cooled.

“Why—— nine o’clock,” she stammered.

“Not before?” he asked, anxiously.

“Not before,” she repeated; “even that is too early.”

The old man hesitated. He was sure they would catch nothing, for if the sun

was hot the fish would not bite ; but the two brothers took the matter into their own hands and organized the party before parting with their guest that evening.

Accordingly, on the following Tuesday, the *Perle* had cast anchor under the white rocks of the "*cap de la Hève*," and they had fished with some success till noon; they had then rested and then fished again without catching anything. Old man Roland now perceived, when too late, that Mme. Rosémilly in truth cared for nothing but the sail on the sea, and seeing that the lines were no longer agitated, he had in a moment of unreasonable impatience given vent to an energetic "*Zut*;" addressed as much to the indifferent widow as to the wary fish.

He was now looking at the captured fish, his fish, with the delighted joy of a miser; then, as he raised his eyes to the sky, he saw that the sun was setting.

"Well, boys, suppose we go toward the shore a bit," said he.

They both withdrew their lines from the water and carefully imbedding the hooks in the corks, proceeded to wrap their lines around them.

Roland was standing up, scanning the horizon with the air of a sea-captain.

“No more wind,” he declared; “we must row, boys.” Then, pointing suddenly to the north, he cried:

“There! there is the Southampton packet.”

Over the flat ocean, stretching out like an immense glittering blue cloth, with reflections of gold and fire, appeared a black cloud on the rosy sky in the direction indicated; and beneath this cloud could be seen the outlines of a steamer, looking so small in the distance.

To the south could be seen innumerable other clouds of smoke, all floating in the direction of Havre, the white outlines of which, with its light-house standing like an up-ended horn, could be scarcely distinguished from the yacht.

"Isn't the *Normandie* due to-day?" asked Roland.

"Yes, father," replied Jean.

"Hand me my telescope," rejoined the old man; "I believe that is she over there."

He pulled out the brass tube to its full length, then adjusted it to his eye, and swept the horizon.

"Yes, yes, it is she," he suddenly cried, in rapture at having seen her. "I recognize her two stacks. Would you like to look, Mme. Rosémilly?"

She took the telescope and turned it in the direction of the transatlantic liner without succeeding, no doubt, in locating it, for she saw nothing; nothing but blue encircled in bright colors; an entirely round rainbow, which then changed into all kinds of odd and strange things, and partial eclipses that made her dizzy.

"I have never known how to use that instrument," she said, as she handed it back. "My husband, who spent hours at

the window watching passing ships, was often angry with me on account of my stupidity."

"There must be something the matter with your sight," growled old Roland, quite vexed, "for my glass is an excellent one;" then, turning to his wife, he asked, "Would you like to look through it?"

"No, thank you! I know before hand that it would be useless," she replied.

Mme. Roland, a woman of forty-eight, although she did not show her years, seemed to enjoy this sail on the ocean and the sun-set, more than any of the others.

Her brown hair was streaked with silver; her face bore an expression of tranquillity and kindness, and a look of happiness that was good to behold. According to her son, Pierre, she knew the value of money, but this did not prevent her from tasting the charms of revery. She loved reading, romance and poetry, not for their artistic value, but because of

the tender and melancholy thoughts they awakened in her. A verse, often common-place, or even bad, caused a vibration of that little chord—as she called it—giving her the sensation of a mysterious desire almost realized. She took pleasure in these light emotions that somewhat ruffled her soul, which was always as well balanced as a well-kept ledger.

Since their arrival at Havre she had grown stouter, and her slender and supple waist of other days had been visibly affected.

She was delighted with this excursion on the sea. M. Roland, though not a bad husband, was sometimes harsh, in the manner of a despot, who rules without anger and without hatred, but whose word is equivalent to a command. Before strangers he curbed his temper, but in his family he made terrible scenes, although he feared everybody. His wife, through a horror of quarrels and useless

explanations, always submitted, and never asked for anything; therefore, although loving the sea deeply, she had never requested permission to accompany him.

She now abandoned herself entirely to the rare pleasures of the sea. The soft gliding over the water and the caress of the soft breeze filled her heart with delight. She thought neither of the past nor the future, forgetting her dreams and her hopes; and it seemed to her that her heart, like her body, was floating over some smooth surface, some delicious fluid that lulled and rocked her into oblivion.

When the father gave the command: "Make for the shore!" she smiled to see her sons, her two grown-up sons, taking off their coats and rolling up their shirt sleeves.

Pierre, who was nearest to the two women, took the starboard oar, while Jean took the larboard, and both awaited

the cry of the captain, "forward!" the old man being very particular to see that the maneuvers were regularly executed.

Together they dipped their oars, each giving a vigorous stroke, and the contest began. They had used the sails in the morning, but the wind had now gone down, and the spirit of rivalry was suddenly awakened in the two brothers at the prospect of measuring their strength against each other.

When they went fishing alone, with their father, they rowed without any one at the rudder, for Roland, while preparing the lines, would direct them by a gesture or a word—"Ease off, Jean,"—"Bend to it Pierre,"—he would cry; or, "Forward *one*, forward both;"—"A little more muscle there." The one who had been dreaming would then pull harder, while the ambitious one would become less ardent, and the boat would soon resume its proper course.

This day they were determined to test

their strength. Pierre's arms were hairy, thin and nervous, while Jean's were plump, white and rosy, with a bunch of muscle that rolled under the skin.

Pierre had the advantage at first. His teeth clinched, his brow contracted, his hands clutching the oar firmly, bending it its full length at each stroke, he swayed the *Perle* to one side. Old Roland, from his station in the bow, made himself hoarse repeating "Ease off, *one*;" "Bend to it, *two*;" But number *one* only redoubled his efforts, and number *two* was powerless to respond to those furious strokes.

Finally, the captain gave the order, "Stop!" The two oars were raised together, and Jean was ordered to pull alone for a few instants. From that moment Jean kept the advantage, becoming animated and warmed to the work, while Pierre, breathless and panting from his vigorous efforts, was growing steadily weaker, and his strength was soon ex-

hausted. Four times, in succession, old Roland was forced to order a "stop," to permit the elder brother to regain his breath, and to right the boat!

"I can not imagine what has come over me. I feel a spasm at my heart," muttered the humiliated and enraged Doctor, as the perspiration streamed from his brow down his pale cheeks. "I was well when we started, but the pain has paralyzed my arms."

"Shall I take the two oars?" asked Jean.

"No, thank you; it will pass away," said Pierre, impatiently.

"Look here, Pierre," said his mother, "why do you put yourself in such a state; you are not a child?"

He shrugged his shoulders and again took up his oar.

Mme Rosémilly seemed to have neither seen, heard nor understood anything. At each stroke her little blonde head

made a sudden backward movement that raised the pretty hair from her temples.

“There ! look at the *Prince Albert*, it is catching up with us,” cried old Roland; and everybody turned to look at the Southampton packet, bearing down upon them at full speed. It was long and low, with its two chimneys inclined backward, and its two yellow paddle-boxes round and bulging like cheeks ; its decks were crowded with passengers and open umbrellas. Its rapid, noisy wheels beating the water into foam, gave it the appearance of a hurried courier ; and the straight bow cutting through the water raised narrow transparent billows that dashed against its sides.

As it passed near the *Perle*, old Roland raised his hat, the two women waved their handkerchiefs, and these salutes were responded to by the waving of half a dozen umbrellas on the packet that was now fast disappearing, leaving behind it on the calm and glittering surface of the

sea, innumerable little ripples shining like silver in the setting sun.

From all points of the horizon could be seen many ships, crowned with a cloud of smoke and directed toward the white pier, that swallowed them, one by one like an immense mouth. The fishing yachts, the large sailing vessels, with their light spars gliding against the sky, towed by almost imperceptible tugs, all made for this devouring ogre, who, from time to time, seeming surfeited, cast back to the open sea another fleet of packets, brigs, schooners, and full-rigged ships. The busy steamers glided away to the right and left on the flat bosom of the ocean, while the sailing vessels, abandoned by the tugs that had towed them, remained motionless for a time, dressing up to the mast-head in white or brown canvas, that seemed red in the evening glow.

“Heavens! how beautiful is the sea,”

murmured Mme. Roland, with half-closed eyes.

“Yes, but it sometimes does a great deal of harm,” said Mme. Rosémilly, with a prolonged sigh, that, however, contained nothing of sadness.

“There comes the *Normandie*,” cried old Roland. “Whata monster she is, eh?”

Then he explained the other shore far, far away, the other side of the mouth of the Seine — “a mouth twenty kilometers wide!” he exclaimed. He pointed out Villerville, Trouville, Houlgate, Luc, Arromanches, the river Caen, and the rocks of Calvados, which render navigation to Cherbourg so dangerous. Then he spoke of the shifting banks of sand in the Seine that move with every tide and deceive even the pilots of Quillebœuf, unless they examine the channel every day. He then showed them how the Havre separated lower from upper Normandy. In lower Normandy the flat country sloped to the sea in pastures, prairies

and fields. The coast of upper Normandy, on the contrary, was a steep cliff, indented, abrupt, rugged and imposing, forming an immense white wall to Dunkerque, in every indentation of which was hidden a village or a port — Etre-tat, Fécamp, Saint-Valery, Le-Treport, Dieppe, etc.

The two women no longer listened to him; moved by the view of this ocean covered with ships that wandered about like wild beasts around their den, awed by this vast horizon of land and water, and silenced by the peaceful and magnificent sunset; Roland alone talked incessantly; he was one of those whom nothing troubles, but the more sensitive women, without knowing why, felt irritated by the noise of this useless voice.

Pierre and Jean, now calmed, were rowing leisurely, and the *Perle*, so small beside the big ships, continued its course toward the port.

When they reached the quay, the

sailor Papagris, who was awaiting them, assisted the ladies ashore, and they mixed with the crowd that assembles on the quay each day at high tide.

The two ladies walked on, followed by the three men. They went up the Rue de Paris, stopping frequently to admire a bonnet or a jewel in a shop window, and then walked on discussing what they had seen.

When they reached the Bourse, Roland stopped to contemplate—as he never failed to do each day—a succession of basins filled with ships, whose enormous hulls were packed together four or five rows deep. All these innumerable masts, with their yards, ropes and pennons, on this stretch of several kilometers of quays, gave to this opening into the middle of the city the aspect of a great dead forest. Above this leafless forest the sea-gulls circled, ready to descend like a falling stone on the debris that fell into the water; and a sailor who was attaching

a pulley to the extremity of a yard-arm, looked like a boy searching for birds-nests in a tree.

“Will you dine with us, that we may have the pleasure of finishing the day together?” asked Mme. Roland of Mme. Rosémilly.

“With pleasure,” said the young widow, in delight, “it would be so lonesome for me to spend the evening alone.”

“There! the widow is trying to ingratiate herself now,” murmured Pierre, who felt hurt by the indifference of the young woman.

Since the last few days he always called her “the widow.” This annoyed Jean, simply through the malicious and insulting tone in which it was uttered.

After this the silence remained unbroken until the three men reached their home. It was a low, narrow house on the Rue Belle Normande, consisting of a basement and two low stories. The bell was answered by the servant Jose-

phine, a cheap country servant of nineteen years, who was endowed to excess with that air of astonishment and stupidity that belongs exclusively to peasants. She opened the door, reclosed it, ascended the stairs behind the family with no more expression on her countenance than if she had been a dummy, but, as they reached the parlor, she announced triumphantly: "A gentleman called three times!"

"Who was he?" asked old Roland, with the oath he never failed to hurl at the inoffending servant on all occasions.

"A gentleman from the notary," said the unruffled servant, who was never disturbed by these burst of anger from her master.

"What notary?" thundered old Roland.

"Why, Mr. Canu, of course," she answered, stupidly.

"And what did the gentleman say?" he growled, fiercely.

“That Mister Canu would come himself this evening,” she replied.

M. Lecanu was the notary and friend of old Roland, and transacted all his business for him. It must, indeed, have been a very urgent and important business when he announced his visit beforehand; and the four Rolands looked at each other, evidently troubled — as anybody with a modest fortune would naturally be — by the intervention of their notary. It awakened in them a host of ideas, of contracts, of inheritances, of law-suits, and of all desirable and undesirable things.

“What, can it be?” murmured old Roland after a short silence.

“I am sure it must be an inheritance,” laughed Mme. Rosémilly, “for I bring luck to my friends.”

But they could think of no relative whose death might enrich them.

Mme. Roland, who was gifted with an excellent memory for relationships, at

once set about hunting up the alliances on both sides of the family; tracing the filiations and following out the branches of cousinships.

“Do you remember, father” — she called her husband father in the house, and sometimes M. Roland before strangers — “Do you remember,” she said, as she removed her bonnet, “who Joseph Lebru’s second wife was?”

“Yes, she was a Dumeuil girl, the daughter of a paper-hanger,” replied he.

“Had they any children?” she continued.

“I should say so! four or five, at least,” he replied.

“Then it cannot be from there!” she sighed.

She was already animated in this search, and clung to the hope that a little good luck would fall to them from heaven. But Pierre, who loved his mother very much, and feared the little disappointment and sadness of a disillusion of the

news, instead of being good was the contrary, interrupted her reveries.

“Do not trouble yourself, mother,” said he, “there are no more rich uncles in America. I am rather inclined to think that it is relative to a marriage settlement for Jean.”

This idea was a surprise to all, and Jean, who was terribly vexed that this should be said in the presence of Mme. Rosémilly, retorted:

“Why for me any more than for yourself? The supposition is quite contestable. You are the elder, and one would naturally suppose you would be the first to marry! Besides, I have no intention of marrying.”

“You are then a lover,” laughed Pierre sarcastically.

“Is it necessary to be a lover,” replied the other angrily, “to say that one does not want to marry yet?”

“Ah, good! The ‘yet’ explains all; you are waiting.”

“Admit that I am waiting, then, if you wish.”

But old Roland, who had been listening and reflecting, suddenly found the most reasonable solution to the mystery.

“Humph!” he exclaimed, “how stupid of us to bother our brains about it. M. Lecanu is a friend of ours; he knows that Pierre and Jean are looking for suitable offices, and he has probably found one that might do.”

This was so very simple and probable that they were all convinced that he must be right.

The servant now announced dinner, and they all hurried away to prepare for that meal.

Ten minutes later they reassembled in the dining-room, in the basement.

They spoke but little at first, but after a few minutes Roland was again overcome by astonishment at the proposed visit of the notary. Why had he not written? Why had he sent his clerk

three times? And why was he coming himself? he kept repeating.

Pierre thought this all very natural.

“He undoubtedly required an immediate answer, and he might have some confidential clause to communicate that he did not care to write.”

But they remained preoccupied, and it must be admitted that they all regretted their invitation to this stranger, whose presence embarrassed their discussions and restrained them from forming plans.

They had just returned to the parlor when the notary was announced.

“Good evening, dear *maître!*” exclaimed Roland, grasping him by the hand.

He always addressed M. Lecanu by the title of *maître*, which always precedes the name of a notary.

“I must go, I am quite tired,” said Mme. Rosémilly, rising from her seat.

They made a feeble attempt to detain her, but she insisted, and took her depart-

ure without any of the three men offering to escort her, as was their usual habit.

“Will you have a cup of coffee, Monsieur?” asked Mme. Roland politely.

“No, thank you, I have just left the dinner-table,” he replied.

“A cup of tea then?” she asked, eagerly.

“Let us proceed to business first,” said the notary, “and I will take it afterward.”

In the profound silence that followed these words, could be plainly heard the even ticking of the clock and the noise of the dishes being washed by the servant, who was even too stupid to listen at the door.

“Did you know a certain M. Maréchal, Leon Maréchal, of Paris?” began the notary.

“Indeed we did!” exclaimed the husband and wife together.

“ He was one of your friends? ” he said, interrogatively.

“ The best of friends; but an enthusiastic Parisian who never leaves the boulevard,” declared Roland. “ He is chief clerk of the bureau of finance. I have not seen him since I left Paris, and we have ceased to write to each other long ago. You know how it is when we live at a distance from each other — ”

“ M. Maréchal is dead! ” interposed the notary gravely.

The husband and wife greeted this intelligence with that gesture of surprise which is always instantaneous and which conveys either assumed or genuine sorrow.

“ My brother notary in Paris,” continued M. Lecanu, “ has just communicated to me the principal condition of his will, by which he makes your son Jean, M. Jean Roland, his sole heir.”

The astonishment caused by this announcement was so great that for a moment no one could say a word.

Mme. Roland was the first to master her emotion.

“Poor Leon—our poor friend—*mon Dieu—mon Dieu*—and he is dead!” she murmured.

Tears came to her eyes, those silent tears of women, drops of anguish that come from the heart and flow on the cheeks, seeming so sorrowful because they are so pure.

But Roland was thinking less of the bitterness of their loss than of the hopes it brought. However, he did not dare ask immediately for further information on the conditions of the will and the amount of the fortune, fearing to appear too eager; but he led up to the interesting question by asking, “And what did poor Maréchal die of?”

“I only know that he died without direct heirs,” said the notary, “and has left his entire fortune, an income of twenty thousand francs, to your second son, whom he had known since his birth,

and whom he judged worthy of this legacy. In default of M. Jean's acceptance, the entire fortune reverts to abandoned children."

Old Roland could no longer dissimulate his joy, and exclaimed,

"*Sacristi!* there's a friendly thought for you. And, indeed, if I had no direct heirs I would certainly have remembered that true friend."

"I am very happy," said the notary, smiling, "to have announced you this good fortune myself. It is always a pleasure to bring good news to your friends."

He had not even stopped to think that this good news was the death of a friend, of Roland's best friend; for even the old man himself had suddenly forgotten the intimacy he had announced with so much conviction a few moments before.

Mme. Roland and her sons alone retained an appearance of sadness. She was still weeping softly, wiping her eyes

in her handkerchief, which she afterward placed over her mouth to stifle her sobs.

“He was a good and kind man,” murmured the young doctor, “he often invited my brother and myself to dine with him.”

Jean, with his bright eyes dilated, was absently tugging at his beard with his right hand, allowing it to slip slowly through his fingers.

Twice he opened his lips to utter some suitable phrase, but in vain; and, after searching for a long time, all he could find to say was :

“He loved me very much indeed, and always kissed me when we met.”

But the thoughts of the father were galloping, galloping around this announced inheritance, already acquired; this money hidden behind the door, that would come so soon, to-morrow, at the word of acceptance.

“Are there no possible difficulties? —

any law-suits—or contestations?” he asked, anxiously.

“None,” replied the notary. “I have been notified that everything is clear, and we only await M. Jean’s acceptance.”

“The fortune is then ready?—all formalities gone through” continued the old man, eagerly.

“All!” replied the notary, briefly.

A sort of vague instinctive shame at his eagerness for information made him add, quickly: “You understand that I merely ask these things to save my son any unexpected difficulties. Sometimes there are debts, embarrassing conditions, or I know not what, and we get into inextricable entanglements. In fact, I am not the interested party, but only ask to save the ‘little one’ trouble.”

In the family Jean was always called the “little one,” although he was larger than his brother.

Suddenly Mme. Roland seemed to awaken from a dream, to remember

something heard long, long ago; almost forgotten, in fact, and of which she was not quite certain, moreover.

"Did you not say that our poor Maréchal had left his fortune to my little Jean?" she said inquiringly.

"Yes, Madame."

"It makes me very happy, for it proves that he loved us," she added, simply.

"Do you wish my son to sign the acceptance at once, my dear *maître*," said old Roland, starting up.

"No — no — Monsieur Roland. Not now, to-morrow. Would it be convenient for you to call at my office at two o'clock in the afternoon?"

"Why, yes! certainly, certainly," assented Roland, eagerly.

Then Madame Roland arose and, smiling through her tears, laid her hand on the notary's arm, looking at him with the tender look of a grateful mother, and asked: "And that cup of tea, Monsieur Lecanu?"

"I will take it with pleasure now, madame," said the notary.

The servant first brought in some of those dry cakes put up in deep tin boxes; that insipid and brittle English pastry that seems baked for the beak of a parrot, and soldered up in metal boxes for a voyage around the world. She then went out in search of gray napkins, folded carefully into small squares, those tea napkins that are never washed in busy families. She returned a third time with the sugar-bowl and cups; then went out to boil the water, while the company patiently waited.

They were all too much preoccupied to think of anything to say. Mme. Roland alone found common-place topics. She chatted about their fishing excursion, praising the *Perle* and Mme. Rosémilly.

"Charming, charming," repeated the notary.

Roland, with his back to the chimney, as if warming himself on a cold winter

night, his hands thrust deeply into his pockets, and his lips puckered as if about to whistle, could scarcely repress his imperious desire of giving vent to his joy.

The two brothers, seated one on each side of the central table, with legs crossed, were looking fixedly before them, both in the same attitude, but filled with different thoughts.

The tea was finally brought in. The notary, after dropping a lump of sugar into his cup, and crumbling one of the little cakes into his tea—it being too hard to bite through—drank in silence. Then he arose, shook hands with everybody, and prepared to go.

“It is understood, then,” said Roland, as he accompanied him to the door, “to-morrow, at two o’clock, at your office.”

“Yes, to-morrow, at two o’clock,” repeated the notary.

After the notary’s departure there was another silence; then old Roland, coming up to Jean, who had not yet found a

word to say, and, slapping him on the shoulders, cried gaily:

“Well, you rascal, ain’t you going to kiss me?”

“I was not aware that it was indispensable,” said Jean, smiling, and kissing him.

But the old man was wild with delight. He walked about, drumming on the furniture with his awkward fingers, pivoting on his heels, and repeating:

“What luck! what luck! Here is a stroke of fortune.”

“Was Maréchal a very old friend of yours?” asked Pierre, suddenly.

“Indeed he was, and he always spent his evenings at our house. But you must remember that he always brought you home on your weekly holiday from college, and took you back after dinner. Why it was he who went after the doctor the morning Jean was born. He was breakfasting with us when your mother was taken sick. He understood at once

what the matter was, and, in his haste, took my hat instead of his own. I remember this very well, for we often laughed about it afterward. It is even probable that he remembered this occurrence when he was dying, and, having no direct heir, said to himself: "As I assisted at the birth of that little fellow, I will leave him my fortune."

Mme. Roland, seeming lost in recollections of the past, murmured from the depths of her easy chair, as if thinking aloud :

"Ah! he was a true friend, very faithful and devoted. Indeed, such friends are few nowadays."

"I am going out for a walk," said Jean, abruptly.

His father was astonished and wished to detain him ; they had had no time to talk, form any projects, or come to any understanding. But the young man insisted, pleading an appointment as a pretext ; besides there would be time enough

to talk the matter over before he came into possession of the inheritance.

And he went out, anxious to be alone, to reflect. Pierre soon after declared his intention of taking a stroll also, and followed his brother in a few minutes.

As soon as he was alone with his wife old Roland caught her in his arms, kissed her ten times on each cheek, and, in reply to a reproach she had often addressed him, said :

“ You see, my dear, that it would have been useless for me to remain in Paris any longer, and killing myself to provide for the children, instead of coming here to recuperate my health, since heaven has sent us this fortune.”

“ Heaven has sent a fortune to Jean,” she said, gravely. “ But Pierre ? ”

“ Pierre ! why, he is a doctor ; he can earn — money — and besides his brother will certainly do something for him.”

“ No. He would not accept it. Besides, this inheritance belongs to Jean, to

Jean only. Pierre will therefore be at a disadvantage."

The old man seemed perplexed for a moment, but suddenly brightened up.

"Then," said he, "we can leave him the bulk of our fortune."

"No, that would not be just, either," she said, thoughtfully.

"Well then, *Zut!* what more can I do? You are always hunting up disagreeable ideas and spoiling my pleasures," he growled, fiercely; then added, more gently, "Well, good night; I am going to bed. All the same, it is a rare streak of good fortune."

And he went off enchanted, in spite of all, and without one word of regret for his generous friend.

Madame Roland continued to dream in front of the smoking lamp.

CHAPTER II.

PIERRE directed his steps toward the Rue de Paris, the principal street of Havre, now full of light, animation and noise. The cool sea breeze caressed his cheeks and brow as he walked slowly on, his cane under his arm, and his hands behind his back.

He felt ill-at-ease, discontented, stupefied, as if he had received unwelcome news. No precise thought afflicted him, and he could not have told whence came this sadness of heart and numbness of body. Something was wrong, he knew not what; he could feel something painful within him, one of those almost insensible bruises that we cannot locate, but that fatigue and irritate. One of those slight and unknown sufferings, something like a grain of sorrow.

When he reached the *place du Theatre*,

the lights of the Café Tortoni attracted him, and he walked slowly to the illuminated façade. But as he was about to enter, the thought that he would meet friends there, and be obliged to make himself agreeable, restrained him, being suddenly overcome by a repugnance for the associations of the place. Retracing his steps, he returned to the principal street and walked toward the harbor.

“Where shall I go?” he asked himself, searching in vain for a place that would please him and be congenial to his mind; for he was irritated at being alone, and still did not want to meet anyone.

When he reached the quay he again hesitated, then turned toward the pier — he had chosen solitude.

He soon reached a bench on the breakwater and sank down on it, already weary and disgusted with his stroll.

“What ails me to-night?” he repeated to himself. And he began to search in his mind for the cause of this irritation,

as one questions a patient to find the cause of his fever.

He was excitable and thoughtful at the same time; he perplexed himself, then reasoned; approving or blaming his impulses; but the former nature remained stronger to the last, and his sensitiveness always dominated his intelligence.

He, therefore, searched for the cause of his nervousness, this need of movement without aim, this desire of meeting some one to disagree with, and also this repugnance for the people he might see and for what they might say.

“Can it be Jean’s inheritance?” he asked himself.

Yes, it was possible, after all. When the notary announced the news, he had felt the violent beating of his heart. Indeed, one cannot always master his feelings, and we sometimes experience spontaneous and persistent emotions, against which we struggle in vain.

He began to reflect deeply on the psy-

chological problem, of the impression produced by a fact on the sensitive being, and creating within him a current of ideas and of painful or joyous emotions, contrary to the desire or the good judgment of the thinking being, who has become superior to himself by the culture of his intelligence.

He tried to conceive the state of mind of a son who inherits a large fortune, and who is about to enjoy so many long-desired pleasures, forbidden by the avarice of a loved and regretted father.

He arose, and walked toward the end of the pier. He felt better; pleased to have understood and surprised himself, to have unveiled that "other" who is within us.

"So I have been jealous of Jean," he thought, "that is truly base! I am sure of it now, for the first thought that came to me was his marriage with Mme. Rosémilly, although I do not like that matter-of-fact little goose, made to disgust one

with good sense and wisdom. It is, therefore, gratuitous jealousy, the very essence of jealousy; that which is, because it is! I must beware of it!"

He was now near the signal post, which indicates the height of the water in the harbor, and he lighted a match to read the list of ships reported in sight and that would come into port with the next tide. Steamers from Brazil, de la Plata, Chili and Japan had been sighted; also two Danish brigs, a Norwegian schooner and a Turkish ship. This last surprised Pierre as much as if he had read a "Swiss steamer," and he saw, in a sort of odd vision, a large vessel crowded with men, in turbans and wide pantaloons, ascending the riggings.

"How stupid I am," he thought, "the Turks are really a maritime nation."

A few steps further on he stopped to contemplate the harbor. On the right, above *Sainte Adresse*, the two electric light-houses, resembling two monstrous

twin cyclops, cast their long and powerful glances on the sea. The two parallel rays descended like giant tails of two comets, following a straight and immeasurable declivity from the summit of the hill to the depth of the horizon. On the two piers, two other fires, children of these colossi, indicated the entrance of the Havre. And over there, on the other shore of the Seine, could be seen many others, fixed or twinkling, bright or eclipsed, opening and shutting like eyes; the eyes of harbors, yellow, red, green, watching the obscure sea covered with ships; the eyes of the hospitable land saying, only by the invariable and regular mechanical movement of their eye-lids: "It is I" — "I am Trouville" — "I am Honfleur" — "I am the river of Pont-Audernes" — and, dominating all the others, so high that from a distance it was mistaken for a planet, the aerial light-house d'Etourville showed the way

to Rouen, through the sand banks at the mouth of the great river.

On the deep limitless waters, more somber than the sky, could be seen here and there stars that trembled in the nocturnal mist. They were small, close or distant, white, green or red, almost all motionless, though a few seemed to wander; these were the lights of the ships at anchor, awaiting the incoming tide, or ships wandering about in search of moorings.

Just at this moment the moon arose behind the city, appearing like an enormous and divine beacon, lighted in the firmament to guide the infinite fleet of true stars.

“And we trouble ourselves about trifles,” murmured Pierre, half aloud.

Suddenly a tall, fantastic shadow glided into the dark open space between the piers. Leaning over the granite parapet he saw the barque of a fisherman entering the harbor, without the sound of voice,

or the noise of oars or billows, propelled softly by its high brown sail, expanded to the breeze of the sea.

“If we could live forever on that,” he thought, “we would perhaps be contented!” Then, taking a few more steps along the pier, he saw a man seated at the extremity of the jetty.

Who was he? A dreamer, a lover, or a sage, a happy or an unfortunate being? He came nearer, curious to see the face of this solitary figure, and he recognized his brother.

“Halloo! Is it you, Jean?” he exclaimed.

“Why — Pierre — what are you doing here?” asked his brother, in surprise.

“Oh! I have come to breathe the fresh air. And you?”

“I am here for the same purpose,” laughed Jean.

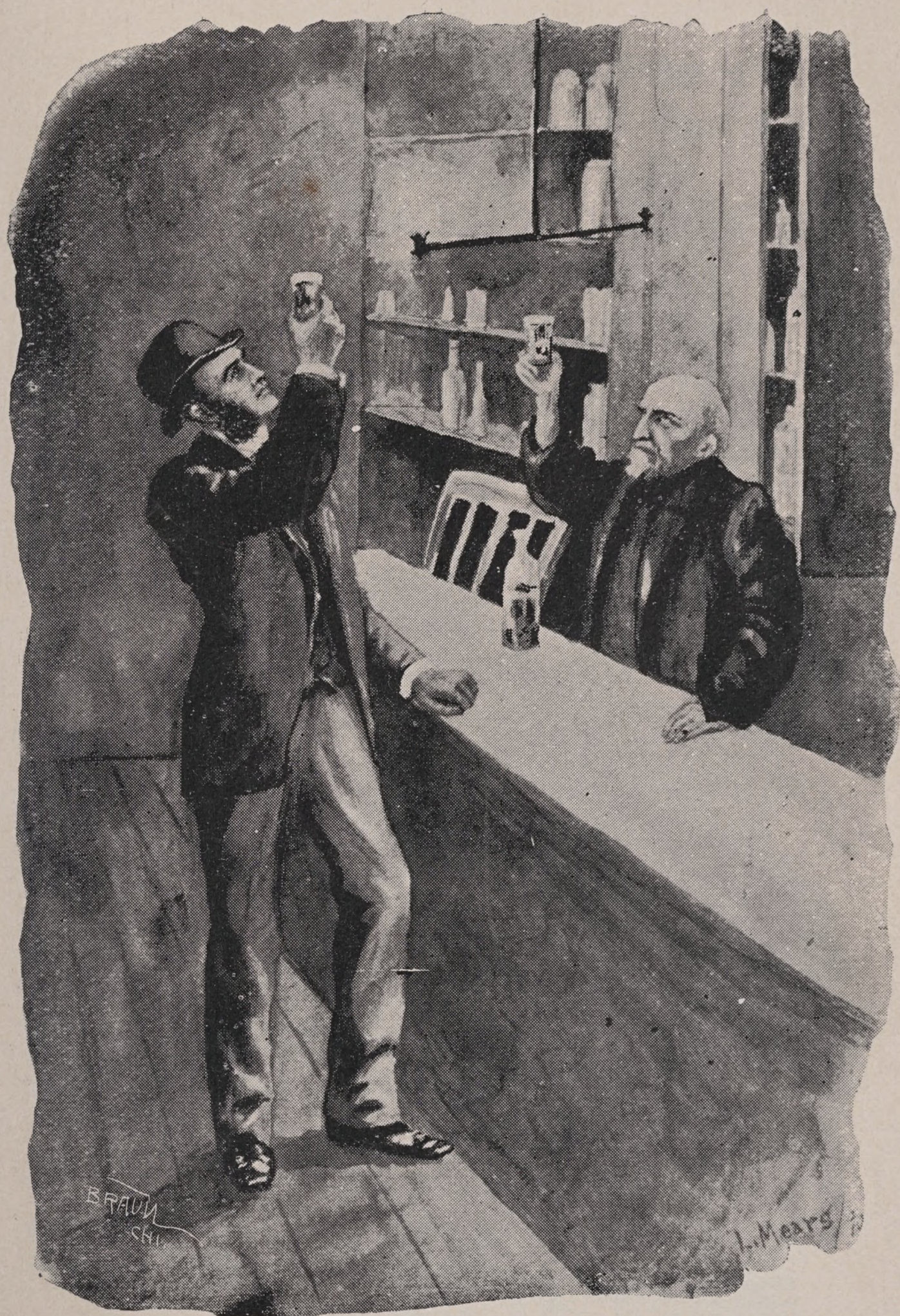
“Hem! it is passingly beautiful here!” said Pierre, seating himself beside his brother.

“Yes, indeed,” said Jean, carelessly.

At the sound of his voice Pierre understood that Jean had not seen anything, and he continued:

“Whenever I come here I have wild longings to go away, to the north or to the south, anywhere with those ships. Think that those little lights over there come from all points of the compass, from lands of flowers and of beautiful pale or dark women; from lands of brilliant birds, elephants, warring lions and negro kings; from all those countries that are but fairy tales to us who no longer believe in Sinbad the Sailor, nor in the Sleeping Beauty. It would be simply delightful to treat one’s self to a trip over there; but then it would take money, a great deal —

He stopped abruptly, remembering that his brother now had that money, and that free from all anxiety and daily labor, without incumbrance, happy, joyful, he could go wherever he chose, toward



the blonde Swiss or the dark southern beauty.

Then one of those involuntary thoughts, frequent in him, and so abrupt and rapid that he could neither foresee, arrest, nor modify, seeming to come from a second independent and violent soul, passed through his mind: "Bah! he is too stupid. He will marry that little Rosémilly."

"I leave you to dream of the future and I will continue my walk," he said, as he arose. Then, taking his brother's hand, he added, cordially: "Well, my dear Jean, you are now rich! I am glad to have met you alone this evening, to tell you how much it pleases me, to assure you of my sincere affection, and to offer my congratulations."

Jean, who was of a tender nature, was much moved, and stammered: "Thank you—thank you—my good Pierre—you are very kind."

And Pierre walked away slowly, his

cane under his arm and his hands behind his back.

When he reached the city he again asked himself what he should do; he felt vexed and irritated to have been interrupted in his meditations and deprived of the sea by the presence of his brother. "I shall go and have a glass of something with old Marowsko," he thought, and he turned in the direction of the quarter of Ingouville.

Old Marowsko was a Polish exile, whom he had met in a Paris hospital. It was said that he had a terrible history over there in his own country, and had been obliged to seek shelter in France, where, after passing a new examination, he had established himself as an apothecary. Nothing was known of his past life, but many dark rumors were whispered among the students and, later, among his neighbors. That reputation of redoubtable conspirator, nihilist and regicide; of fearless patriot who had escaped death

only through a miracle, had attracted the lively and adventurous imagination of Pierre Roland; and he had become the friend of the old exile without having obtained, however, any information of his life. It was owing to this friendship that the old man had established himself at Havre, counting on the young doctor's practice to make his business successful.

In the meantime he was living very poorly in his modest little shop, by selling medicine to the working men and small trades people in his neighborhood.

Pierre often visited him for an hour's chat after dinner, for he loved the quiet manners and rare conversations of the old exile, whose silence on his former life he respected.

A single gas-jet burned above the counter, loaded with bottles. He never lighted more, through economy. Behind this counter, with his chin sunk on his breast, was the old man, sleeping profoundly in his chair; his long, hooked

nose sloping from his projecting brow, and his bald head, giving him the sad and thoughtful look of a parrot.

At the sound of the bell he awoke, and, recognizing the young doctor, came to meet him with extended hand.

His black frock-coat, stained and soiled by acids and sirups, and much too large for his thin, small body, had the appearance of an antique cossack, and his strong Polish accent gave his thin voice a childish sound, like the lisping of a baby who is commencing to talk.

"Anything new, my dear Doctor?" asked Marowsko, as he offered him a chair.

"Nothing; the same old story," answered the young man.

"You do not look very cheerful," said the old man, anxiously.

"I am not of a very gay disposition," sighed Pierre.

"There, there! you must shake that off. Will you take a glass of *liqueur*?" he asked, by way of consolation.

“Yes, that will cheer me up,” assented Pierre.

“Then I shall give you a taste of my new preparation. I have been two months trying to extract something from the gooseberry, which until now has been used for sirups only. Well, at last I have found—I have found—something good, very good,” repeated the old man, rubbing his hands delightedly.

He opened a cupboard, and choosing a bottle from among a great number, showed it to Pierre triumphantly, giving it at the same time a series of short, incomplete jerks, for he never made an entire, definite movement, or even stretched out his arms and legs to their full length. His ideas were similar to his actions; he indicated, promised, outlined or suggested, but never announced them.

His greatest preoccupation in life, however, seemed to be the preparation of sirups and *liqueurs*. “With a good sirup

or a good *liqueur* one may make a fortune," he often said.

He had invented hundreds of sweet preparations, without succeeding in introducing a single one of them. Pierre declared that Marowsko reminded him of Marat.

Two little glasses were brought from the back of the shop and placed on the counter; then, having filled them, the two men held them up to the gas-light to examine the coloring of the liquid.

"A pretty ruby!" declared Pierre. The old Pole shook his parrot-head in delight.

The young doctor then carried his glass to his lips, tasted, reflected, tasted again, smacked his lips, and pronounced it, "Very good, very good, and very new in flavor; a discovery, indeed, my dear friend!"

"Ah! truly, I am quite delighted," cried the old man, flattered.

He then consulted his young friend as

to the christening of this new *liqueur*; he had thought of several suitable names, as "Gooseberry Essence," "Fine Gooseberry," "Groselia," or "Groseline," but Pierre approved of none of them.

Then an idea suddenly struck Marowsko: "What you said a while ago was very good, very good," he declared, "Pretty Ruby," that would be excellent.

But Pierre, although he had found it, still contested the appropriateness of this name, and advised that he should call it simply: "Groseillette," a name which Marowsko declared admirable.

Then after a few moments' silence under the light of the single gas-jet, Pierre, almost in spite of himself, said to his companion:

"A very strange thing has happened in our family this evening. A friend of my father's, who has just died, left his fortune to my brother."

The old chemist seemed not to understand at first, but, after a few moments'

reflection, hoped that the doctor had inherited half. When the matter had been fully explained, he was surprised and angry at the slight put upon his young friend; and he repeated several times, as if to give vent to his displeasure:

“It will have a bad effect, a bad effect!”

“Why will it have a bad effect?” asked Pierre, who felt his uneasiness returning, “What bad effect could result from the fact that my brother has inherited the fortune of a friend of the family?”

But the old man answered cautiously: “In such cases the fortune should be divided equally between the two brothers. I assure you that this will have a bad effect.”

And the doctor returned home and went to bed, much vexed and disturbed. For a while he heard Jean walking softly in the next room, then dropped asleep, after swallowing two glasses of water in succession.

CHAPTER III.

NEXT morning the young doctor awoke with the firm determination of making his fortune.

He had many times before taken this resolution, without, however, attaining the reality. At the beginning of all his attempted new careers the hope of quickly-acquired riches had sustained his efforts and his confidence until he encountered the first obstacle; until the first repulse threw him into a new course and new hopes.

Buried deep amid the warm coverings of his bed, he was now meditating. How many doctors had become millionaires in a short time? All that was required was a little skill and ability, for, during his course of studies, he had closely observed the most celebrated professors, and he judged them to be asses. Indeed, he was

certainly as good, if not better. If he could, by whatever means, secure the patronage of the rich and influential residents of Havre, he could easily make a hundred thousand francs a year. And he went on calculating what the precise gain would be.

In the morning he would go out to visit his patients. Taking the small average of ten per day, at twenty francs each, it would give him, at the lowest calculation, seventy-two thousand francs a year, or even seventy-five thousand francs, for he was quite certain that his basis of ten patients was lower than the assured reality. In the afternoon he would receive in his office an average of ten others at ten francs each, making thirty-six thousand francs — total a hundred and twenty thousand francs, in round numbers. Of course there would be the old clients and friends, whom he would visit at ten francs, and prescribe for at his office at five francs only ; but this re-

duction would be more than offset by the fees received in consultation with other physicians and other small sources of revenue pertaining to the profession, which he had not calculated.

Nothing was easier than to achieve this. It simply required skillful advertising and flattering articles in the *Figaro*, indicating that the scientific world was interested in, and closely watched, the wonderful cures undertaken by this young and modest Havrian *savant*. And he would be richer than his brother ; richer and more eminent, besides having the satisfaction of feeling that he owed his fortune to his own unaided efforts ; and he would be generous to his old parents, who would be justly proud of his renown. He would not marry, not wishing to incumber himself with an only and troublesome woman, but he would chose mistresses from among his prettiest patients.

He felt so assured of success that he jumped out of bed, as if to seize it at once,

and he dressed hurriedly, that he might immediately begin his search for suitable apartments.

Then, as he walked through the streets, he was thinking of how slight, indeed, were the determining causes of our actions. Since three weeks he might and should have taken this resolution, which now came to him, no doubt, through the knowledge of his brother's inheritance, and fired his ambition.

He stopped before the doors on which were displayed notices of beautiful or rich apartments to let; those without such adjectives he passed on in disgust, as being unworthy of notice. The former he visited, assuming a haughty and supercilious air for the occasion, measuring the height of the ceiling, sketching a plan of the rooms on his memorandum book, the dispositions of the doors, etc., and announced, pompously, that he was a doctor, and received many callers. The stairway must be wide and well-kept,

and, besides, he could not ascend above the first story.

After jotting down seven or eight addresses, and at least two hundred notes, for future reference, he returned home a quarter of an hour late for breakfast.

As he entered the hall he was greeted by the noise of plates, knives and forks. They were, then, breakfasting without him. What did it mean? They were not usually so prompt for breakfast. He felt hurt and vexed at this apparent neglect of him.

“Come, Pierre! hurry up!” cried his father, as he entered the room. “You know very well that we are going to the notary’s office at two o’clock, and there is no time to waste.”

The young doctor kissed his mother, and shaking hands with his father and brother, took his seat without a word; and helping himself to the cutlet reserved for him in the platter, he found it cold, dry, and most likely the worst of the lot.

He could not help thinking that they might at least have left it in the oven until his arrival, and not forget him — the elder son — entirely.

The conversation, which had been interrupted by his entrance, was now again taken up where they had left off.

“If it were I,” Mme. Roland was saying to Jean, “I would at once set up a rich establishment; something that would make people open their eyes; I would go into society; ride a great deal in public, and choose one or two interesting cases, to make myself a name. I should want to be a kind of amateur lawyer, whose opinion would be much sought after. Thank Heaven! you are now above want, and if you do take up a profession, it is merely so you won’t lose the fruit of your studies, and because a man should always have something to do.

“*Cristi!*” exclaimed old Roland, laying down the pear he was eating. “If I were you, what a fine yacht I’d buy; something

on the model of the pilots, and go off for a trip to those foreign countries.”

Pierre, in his turn, now gave his advice. It was not wealth alone that made the moral or intellectual worth of a man. For the mediocre it was only a source of degradation, while it was, on the contrary, a powerful lever in the hands of the strong. But then these latter were rare. If Jean were a superior man, he could prove it, now that he was above need, but he should have to work a hundred times more than if he were in other circumstances. It would not be sufficient to plead for or against the widow or orphan, and to pocket so many dollars for each suit gained or lost; but he must become an eminent jurist—a legal light, and he added, in conclusion, “If I had money, what a number of bodies I should dissect.”

“Tra la la!” sung the old man, shrugging his shoulders, “the wisest thing in life is to let it flow tranquilly. We are not beasts of burden, we are men. When

we are born poor, we must work; ah! well then, so much the worse; but when we have a large income, *sacristi!* we should be very stupid to bother our brains."

"Our tendencies are not the same!" replied Pierre, haughtily, "I respect nothing in this world but knowledge and intelligence; all else is contemptible."

Mme. Roland, who always tried to smooth the incessant disputes between father and son, now turned the conversation by speaking of a recent murder, committed at Bolbec-Nointôt. Their minds were soon fully occupied by the circumstances surrounding this crime, attracted by the interesting horror, the mysterious charm of crimes, which, though vulgar, shameful, and repugnant, always exercises a strange and general fascination for human curiosity.

Although interested, old Roland did not forget to consult his watch frequently.

"There," said he at last, "it is time to make a start."

"It is not yet one o'clock," laughed Pierre. "Really it was not worth while hurrying breakfast and leaving me a cold cutlet."

"Will you come with us?" asked his mother.

"I, why should I?" he replied, drily. "My presence is quite unnecessary."

Jean was still silent, as if the matter neither concerned nor interested him. While they had discussed the murder at Bolbec, he had as a lawyer advanced a few ideas and observations on crime and criminals in general, but now that the conversation again turned on the inheritance, he fell back into his former silence. The animated color of his cheeks and the bright light in his eyes alone proclaimed his happiness.

When the others had gone, Pierre again hurried out to resume his search. After two or three hours of inquiries, and climbing up and down stairs, he at last

discovered something quite suitable on the Boulevard François I.

These apartments were on the first floor, and had two entrances on different streets. They consisted of two parlors, a small conservatory, in which the patients could walk up and down, amusing themselves among the flowers while awaiting their turn, and a cosy dining-room overlooking the sea.

The price — three thousand francs — proved a stumbling-block, however, as the first quarter was payable in advance, and he had not a single *sou* of his own.

The little fortune amassed by his father brought in an income of barely eight thousand francs, and Pierre had often reproached himself for the embarrassments he had caused his parents in money matters, by his many attempts and long hesitations in the choice of a profession. It was therefore out of the question to count on his father for such an amount; nevertheless, he promised to

give an answer within two days; thinking that he would ask his brother — as soon as he came into his inheritance — for the loan of the first quarter, or even of the half-year; it would be only a matter of fifteen hundred francs after all.

“It is a very simple affair,” he said to himself, “for I can repay it before the end of the year, or perhaps even in a few months. And besides, Jean will be only too happy to do me this favor.”

As it was not yet four o'clock and he had nothing more to do, he wandered into the public garden, where he walked about aimlessly for a while, and then seated himself on a rustic bench. He remained there a long time, his eyes fixed on the ground; too weary even for thought, and overcome by a lassitude that was becoming a distress.

How had he managed to pass his time since his return to the paternal house? Surely he had never so cruelly suffered from inaction and the emptiness of his

existence. He had idled in the same manner every day, watching the tide on the pier, wandering through the streets, lounging in the cafés or at old Marowsko's, idling everywhere. And behold! this life he had hitherto enjoyed, suddenly became odious and intolerable to him.

"If I had the money," he thought, "I would take a long drive into the country, along those shaded roads, skirted by beeches and elms." But these fancies could not be indulged when he scarcely had the price of a glass of wine, or of a postage stamp in his pocket. He suddenly realized how humiliating it was for a man past thirty, to ask his mother for a franc or a louis every time it was needed. "*Cristi!* if I only had money," he exclaimed aloud, digging his cane into the ground.

Then the thought of his brother's inheritance came to him like the sting of a wasp, but he drove it away impatiently,

unwilling to abandon himself to this unreasonable jealousy.

A number of pretty blonde-haired children were playing in the dusty road near him, piling up the sand into mountains, and then scattering it again with their feet, only to rebuild them.

“Our occupations resemble the work of these little urchins,” thought Pierre, who was in one of those gloomy moods when we search all the dark corners of our souls, and shake out its folds, as it were.

Then he asked himself if it were not, after all, the wisest thing in life to beget two or three of these useless little beings, and watch them grow up, with curiosity and complacency. He almost felt a desire to marry. He would not be so lost if he were not alone in his hours of trouble and uncertainty. He could at least have some one near him, and it is something to have a woman's sympathy when we are in pain.

He knew but little of women beyond what he had learned during his *liaisons* in the Latin Quarter, which had never lasted more than a fortnight, or as long as his monthly allowance permitted—to be renewed or replaced in the following month. How he should like to know a woman, a true woman; there must surely exist some good, gentle and sympathizing women. Was not his mother the wisdom and charm of their home?

The thought of paying a visit to Mme. Rosémilly made him start up suddenly, but he immediately sank back into his seat. No, he would not go; she displeased him. She had too much of that low and vulgar good sense; and besides, she seemed to prefer Jean. Although he did not admit it; this preference influenced his estimation of the widow's intelligence, for, while loving his brother, he could not help thinking him somewhat mediocre, and judged himself to be his superior.

However, he could not remain where he was all night, and he again began to ask himself, as on the preceeding evening, what he should do.

He felt a need of sympathy and consolation. Why he should need consolation, he could not say; but he experienced that weariness and sadness of spirit, when the presence and the caress of a woman, the touch of a hand, the rustle of a dress, the tender look of a pair of black or blue eyes seem indispensable to our hearts.

He now suddenly bethought himself of a little bar-maid whom he had frequently seen, and even escorted home one evening, and he made his way to the café where she was employed.

“What would he say to her? and what would she say? Nothing, no doubt; but no matter, he would hold her hand in his for a few seconds, for she seemed to like him well enough. And, indeed, it was very stupid of him not to see her oftener.

He found her dozing on a chair in the almost deserted café. Three men were smoking their pipes, with their elbows on the table, and the cashier was reading a novel, while the proprietor, in his shirt-sleeves, was sleeping soundly on a lounge.

As soon as he entered, the young girl saw him and, starting up from her chair, hurried toward him. "Good-day, how are you?" she cried vivaciously.

"Quite well," he answered, carelessly, "and how are you?"

"I am well enough," she replied. "But how seldom we see you."

"I have very little time to spare," he replied, then added, boastfully: "You know that I am a doctor."

"No, you never told me that. If I had known it I should have consulted you last week, for I was quite sick," she said, reproachfully. "But what will you have?" she continued.

"Give me a bock, and what will you have?" he asked, gallantly.

“ Oh! I'll take a bock, too, since you pay for it,” she laughed.

She brought the glasses; then, seating herself beside him at one of the tables, she continued to chat familiarly, as if that offer had been a tacit understanding of friendship between them.

“ Why do you not come oftener, my dear friend? ” she said, looking at him tenderly, and taking his hand with the easy familiarity of the woman who sells her caresses. “ I am quite in love with you. ”

But he was already disgusted with her; finding her stupid, common and vulgar. “ Women should appear to us as in a dream, or in an aureole of luxury that veils their vulgarity,” he was saying to himself.

“ I saw you passing the other day with a tall young man with light whiskers. Is he your brother? ” she went on.

“ Yes, he is my brother,” he assented.

“ He is very handsome,” she continued.

“Do you think so?” he asked.

“Why, yes; and he looks very jolly,” she added.

What strange impulse lead him to tell this bar-maid of Jean’s inheritance? That thought which he tried to banish when alone, which he drove from him through the fear of awakening jealousy in his soul, now came to his lips, and he told it, as if in need of pouring out the bitterness of his heart to some one.

“My brother is a very fortunate young fellow; he has just inherited an income of twenty thousand francs,” he said, as he carelessly crossed his legs.

“Oh! and who left it to him—his grandmother or his aunt?” she asked, her blue eyes opening wide in surprise.

“No, an old friend of the family,” he replied.

“Only a friend? Impossible! And he left nothing to you?” she asked, eagerly.

“No,” he replied, “he scarcely knew me.”

After a few moments' reflection she added, with a curious smile on her lips:

"Ah, well! your brother is a lucky fellow to have friends of that sort! Really, it is not surprising that he should resemble you so little."

"What do you mean by that?" he asked, angrily, feeling a desire of throttling her, without knowing just why.

"Oh! nothing," she said, resuming her stupid and innocent air; "I only meant that he is luckier than you."

He threw twenty *sous* on the table, and rushed out, with her words ringing in his ears: "It is not surprising that he resembles you so little."

What had she thought? What had she meant by those words? Certainly there was a sting of malice in them. It was a slander, an infamy! Yes, that girl really believed that Jean was the son of Maréchal.

The emotion that overcame him at the thought of this suspicion against his

mother was so violent that he stopped and grasped the wall for support. He entered a café he was passing at the moment and ordered another *bock*.

He felt his heart beat, and he shuddered. Suddenly the recollection of old Marowsko's words—"It will have a bad effect"—came back to him. Had he had the same thought, the same suspicion, as this hussy?

"Can it be that they believe such a thing?" he asked himself, as he watched the white foam in his glass sparkle and die away.

The reasons for this odious suspicion now appeared to him one after the other. clear, evident, and exasperating. That an old bachelor, without heirs, should leave his fortune to the two children of his friend, would be the simplest and most natural thing in the world; but, that he should give it entirely to one of those children, was certainly a cause of astonishment and a source of suspicion to the

world. Why had he not foreseen this? Why had his father not felt it? And why had not his mother guessed it? No, the happiness of this unexpected fortune had so filled their minds as to leave no room for other thought. And, besides, how should these honest people suspect such infamy?

But the public, their neighbors, the merchant, the grocer, all who knew them, in fact, would they not repeat this abominable thing, would they not joke and rejoice among themselves, laugh at his father and scorn his mother.

Would not the same difference observed by the bar-maid, that Jean was fair and he dark, that there was no resemblance of face, figure nor intelligence between them, strike all eyes and minds. When speaking of Roland's sons would they not say: "Which is the true or the false one."

He started up with the resolution of warning his brother at once, of putting

him on his guard against the awful danger that threatened their mother's honor. But what should Jean do? The simplest thing, assuredly, would be to refuse the inheritance, which would then go to the poor, and to tell their friends and acquaintances that the will contained unacceptable clauses and conditions, that would have made of Jean a trustee and not an heir.

On his way home, he reflected that he must see his brother alone, as he could not speak on this subject before his parents.

As he reached the door he heard the sound of laughter in the parlor, and as he entered he recognized the voices of Mme. Rosémilly and Captain Beausire, who had been invited to dinner by his father to celebrate the event.

They had ordered vermouth and absinthe as appetizers, and were already quite jolly. Captain Beausire was a little man who had become round by dint of rolling on the sea, and whose ideas also

seemed rounded like pebbles on the sea-shore. He also possessed a rolling laugh, and appreciated life as being an excellent thing, of which we should take ample advantage.

He was now clinking his glass against old Roland's, while Jean was presenting two newly filled glasses to the ladies.

Mme. Rosémilly would have refused, but Captain Beausire, who had known her husband, cried :

“Come, come, madame, *bis repetita placent*, as we sailors say, and which signifies : “Two *vermouths* never do any harm.” Why, since I have given up the sea, I take two or three glasses of artificial rolling each day before dinner. And then I add another glass after my coffee for ballast ; that leaves me at high sea for the evening. I never take enough for a tempest, though, no, never ; for I fear a shipwreck.”

Roland was delighted by these nautical phrases, and laughed heartily. His face

was already flushed, and his eyes dimmed by the absinthe, and his fat body shook with merriment. He possessed the figure of a shop-keeper—nothing but an enormous round abdomen, wherein the rest of his body seemed engulfed. It was the flabby figure of a man who spends his life sitting down, having no thighs, no chest, no arms, no neck, the seat of his chair having crowded all their substance in the same place.

Beausire, on the contrary, though short and stout, seemed as full as an egg and as hard as a ball.

Mme. Roland had not yet emptied her first glass, but was contemplating her son Jean with eyes bright with happiness.

Jean himself was bursting with joy. The affair was now signed and settled. His income of twenty thousand francs was now a reality. The self-possession that money lends was apparent in his whole being—in his voice, which was more sonorous than before; in his gay

laugh, and in the assurance of his manners.

Dinner was now announced, and old Roland was hurrying forward to offer his arm to Mme. Rosémilly, but his wife interfered, "No, no, father," she cried, "everything is for Jean to-day."

The table was resplendent with unaccustomed luxury. In front of Jean's plate—he was seated in his father's place—an enormous bouquet loaded with silk favors, a real bouquet *de grande ceremonie*, arose like a decked cupola, flanked by four large crystal vases, one containing a pyramid of delicious peaches, the second a monumental cake covered with whipped cream and surmounted by a cathedral with bells of melted sugar; in the third were sliced pine-apples drowned in a clear sirup, and in the fourth—unheard of luxury—were black grapes, imported from tropical countries.

"Thunder!" exclaimed Pierre, as he

took his seat; "we are evidently celebrating the coming of Jean the Rich."

After the soup, the Madeira was brought on, and then everybody began to talk at once. Beausire was telling about a dinner at San Domingo, given by a negro general, and old Roland, while listening, tried to slip between the phrases the account of a dinner given by one of his friends at Mendon, where all the guests were sick for two weeks after. Mme. Rosémilly, Jean and his mother, were planning an excursion and a breakfast at Saint Jouin, where they anticipated an ocean of pleasure; and Pierre was regretting that he had not dined alone in some eating-house by the sea-shore, where he would have escaped all this irritating noise and laughter.

He was wondering how he should ever communicate his fears to his brother and prevail on him to renounce this already accepted fortune which intoxicated him in advance. It would indeed be hard for

him, but it must be; he could not hesitate when their mother's reputation was at stake.

The apparition of an enormous trout started Roland on his favorite topic, and he told of his many fishing expeditions. Beausire then narrated some wonderful exploits that occurred at Gabon, Madagascar, China and Japan; the stories from the last two countries where the fish had faces like the inhabitants, were particularly exciting. He told of the queer appearance of these fishes, with their big golden eyes, their red or blue bellies, their odd fan-shaped fins and their crescent-shaped tails; mimicking their antics in such a droll manner, that everybody laughed till the tears rolled down their cheeks.

"The Normans are justly called the *Gascons* of the North," muttered Pierre, who alone seemed incredulous.

The fish was followed by a *vol-au-vent*, a roasted fowl, a salad, green peas and a

pâté d'alouettes de Pithiviers. Mme. Rosémilly's servant had been pressed into the service; and the gaiety increased with the number of glasses of wine. As the cork popped out of the first bottle of champagne, old Roland, much excited, imitated the noise with his lips, declaring: "I like that better than a shot from a pistol."

"It may, however, be more dangerous for you," sneered Pierre, more and more vexed.

"How so?" asked the old man, forgetting that he had been complaining of his health, of dizziness and constant and inexplicable uneasiness, for some time past.

"Because the ball from a pistol may glance off and miss you, while the glass of wine will inevitably go to your stomach."

"And then?" inquired the old man anxiously, as he deposited his untasted glass on the table.

“And then,” continued his son, “it will burn your stomach, disorganize your nervous system, impede the circulation and prepare the way for apoplexy, which threatens all men of your temperament.”

The increasing intoxication of the old jeweler seemed suddenly dispelled, like smoke by the wind, and he looked at his son with a fixed and uneasy glance, trying to understand if he were really in earnest.

“Ah ! those plagued doctors,” cried Beausire, “they are all the same; don’t eat, don’t drink, don’t fall in love, don’t play; for all that hurts your delicate health. Well ; Monsieur, I have practiced all those forbidden things in all parts of the world, where ever and when ever I could, and I am none the worse for it.”

“In the first place, captain,” said Pierre, angrily, “you are stronger than my father, and then all the *viveurs* speak as you do until the day when — and then they cannot return to tell the prudent doctor that

he was right. When I see my father doing what is most dangerous for him, it is only natural that I should warn him. I should, indeed, be a bad son if I were to act otherwise."

"There, there, Pierre!" interposed his mother, plaintively, "what's the matter now?" It won't hurt him for this once, and it is real mean of you to spoil his pleasure and grieve us all on such an occasion."

"He may do as he pleases, I have warned him," said Pierre, shrugging his shoulders.

But old Roland did not drink. He looked lovingly at his glass filled with clear and luminous wine; watching its light and intoxicating soul escaping in small globules that ascended from the bottom and rapidly evaporated on the surface, with the distrust of a fox that finds a dead hen and suspects a trap.

"Do you think it would hurt me much?" he asked, hesitatingly.

“No, never mind, you may drink it for this once,” said Pierre, who began to reproach himself for his ill-humor, “but you must not abuse it, and fall into a habit of drinking it.”

Old Roland raised his glass, without, however, carrying it to his lips. He contemplated it, sadly, with a curious mixture of longing and fear; then he smelled, tasted, and finally sipped it in little swallows, that he might the better relish the flavor, with his heart full of anguish, of weakness and of gluttony, which changed to regret as soon as he had absorbed the last drop.

As Pierre turned away from his father, he encountered the limpid blue eyes of Mme. Rosémilly. They were fixed on him with a penetrating and reproving look. He guessed and felt the thought that animated this glance, coming from a simple and upright soul, that plainly said: “You are jealous, and it is shameful.”

He lowered his eyes and began to eat, but he had no appetite, and found everything bad. He was harassed by a desire of going away, a wish to fly from the midst of these people, to escape their conversations, their laughter and their joy.

Meanwhile, old Roland, whose judgment was again becoming obscured by the fumes of the wine, was already forgetting his son's warnings, and looked tenderly at an open bottle of champagne out of the corner of his eye. He dared not touch it, through fear of fresh admonitions, but was searching for some plan or artifice by which he could obtain possession of it without awakening Pierre's remarks. A simple ruse occurred to him. He took up the bottle, carelessly, and, holding it by the bottom, extended his arm across the table, and filled the doctor's empty glass. He then made the round of the others, in turn; but when he came to his own glass he began to talk

very loudly and excitedly, and, if he poured any into it, it was certainly through accident; besides, nobody was looking at him.

Pierre was drinking a good deal, to drown his nervousness and irritation; repeatedly filling his glass and carrying the sparkling and transparent liquid to his lips, allowing it to flow slowly into his mouth, and enjoying that little sugared sting of evaporating gas on his tongue.

Little by little, a delicious warmth filled his body. Beginning in the stomach, it soon invaded his entire being, like a warm and beneficent wave. He felt better, less impatient and discontented; and his resolution of speaking to his brother that very night weakened, not that he renounced the thought, but he was loth to disturb that comfortable feeling he felt within him.

Beausire arose to propose a toast and, bowing to the assembled company, he said:

“Most gracious ladies, *Messeigneurs*, we are here to celebrate a happy event in the life of one of our friends. It has been said that ‘Fortune’ is blind, but I believe that she has been simply short-sighted, or malicious, and, having just acquired a powerful marine glass, she has discovered in the port of Havre, the son of our brave comrade, Roland, captain of the *Perle*.”

This speech was greeted with bravos and clapping of hands, and Roland senior arose to respond.

After coughing several times, to clear his throat, for he was parched and his tongue was thick, he stammered: “Thanks, Captain — many thanks for myself and my son — I can never forget your conduct on this occasion — I drink to your wishes.” At this point, however, he was overcome by emotion; the tears came into his eyes and ran slowly down his nose, and, finding no more to say, sank back heavily into his chair.

Jean, laughing heartily, arose in his turn.

“It is I,” said he, “who should now thank the devoted friends, the excellent friends (here he looked at Mme. Rosémilly), who on this day give me this touching proof of their affection. But it is not by words that I can show my gratitude. I shall prove it to-morrow, at each instant of my life and always; for our friendship is not of the kind that passes away in a day.”

His mother was much moved by these words, and murmured approvingly: “Very good, my child.”

“Come, Madame Rosémilly,” called old Beausire, “give us a toast in the name of the fair sex.”

She raised her glass, and, in a voice tinged with sadness, said, gently: “I drink to the memory of Monsieur Maréchal!”

A few seconds of calm and respectful silence followed these words, as if they

had been a prayer, then Beausire, who was always ready with a compliment, remarked:

“It takes a woman to pay so delicate a tribute,” then, turning to old Roland, he asked: “Who was Maréchal, any way? He must have been very intimate with him.”

Old Roland, more affected by the wine than by the memory of his departed friend, began to weep, and stammered incoherently:

“A brother—you know—one of those we never find again—we were always together—he dined with us every evening—and often took us to the theater—I can only say that—that—that—a friend, a true—a true—wasn’t he, Louise?”

“Yes, he was a faithful friend,” she said, simply.

Pierre looked from his father to his mother, but the subject was immediately changed, and he returned to his glass.

He could never clearly remember how the evening ended. They had taken coffee, absorbed much wine, laughed and joked a great deal; then he had gone to bed about midnight, his mind much confused and his head very heavy, and he had slept like a log until nine o'clock next day.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS deep slumber, bathed by champagne and chartreuse, undoubtedly softened and calmed his heart, for he awoke the next morning with more benevolent dispositions. While dressing, he summed up and weighed his emotions of the previous day, trying to decipher clearly and completely the real and secret motives, the interior as well as the exterior causes of his doubts.

It was possible, after all, that on learning that one alone had inherited from a stranger, this bar-maid, with the instinct of a wanton, had had a wrong suspicion ; for did not those creatures always have such suspicions against all respectable women, without even a shadow of foundation for it ? Whenever they spoke of irreproachable characters, was it not to injure and calumniate them ? Every time

a respectable person was mentioned they became angry, as if they had been insulted, crying: "Ah! I know all about your respectable married women! They have more lovers than we, only they hide them, being such hypocrites. Ah! yes; they are very respectable!"

Under any other circumstances he would not have understood, he never would have supposed it possible, that insinuations of that nature could be uttered against his poor mother, who was so good, so simple and worthy. But his soul was troubled by this leaven of jealousy that was fermenting within him. His over-excited mind, filled to overflowing with bitter thoughts against his brother, had, perhaps, in spite of himself, imparted to this wanton, odious suspicions that she would not have had otherwise.

It was possible that his imagination alone—that ungovernable imagination which incessantly escaped his will to

wander forth, free, bold and adventurous into the infinite universe of ideas; sometimes bringing back shameful and inadmissible suspicions and hiding them in the unfathomable depths of his soul, like stolen things — had alone invented and created those terrible doubts. Then his heart assuredly had secrets for him; and had not that wounded heart found, in this abominable suspicion, a means of depriving his brother of that fortune he envied. He now began to suspect himself; interrogating his conscience, like a penitent sinner, on the mysteries of his thoughts.

Mme. Rosémilly, notwithstanding her limited intelligence, possessed the delicate tact and subtle sense of women. Therefore, that idea had not occurred to her, since she had drank to the memory of Maréchal with perfect simplicity. She would not have done thus, had she had the least suspicion. He no longer doubted that his involuntary jealousy of his brother and his religious love of his mother had

exalted his scruples. They were natural and honest, no doubt, but exaggerated.

Having reached this conclusion, he now felt as pleased as if he had accomplished a good action, and he resolved to show himself more friendly to everybody, commencing with his father, who irritated him incessantly by his manners, stupid observations, vulgar opinions and ordinary intellect.

He was punctual to breakfast, and amused the family by his wit and good humor.

"My dear Pierrot," exclaimed his delighted mother, "you can't imagine how amusing you are, when you try."

He kept up his witty conversation, making them laugh at the ingenious portraits he drew of their friends. Beausire served as a foil, and, sometimes, Mme. Rosémilly, even, but with the latter he was discreet and not too malicious, while he looked at his brother, thinking: "Why don't you defend her, you blockhead; you

may be rich, but I can eclipse you whenever I please.

“Will you need the *Perle* to-day?” he asked his father as they drank their coffee.

“No, my son, not to-day,” answered the old man.

“Can I take her and Jean Bart?” he continued.

“Why, certainly, if you wish,” assented his father.

He bought a good cigar from the first tobacconist, and went down in high spirits to the pier; admiring the clear bright sky, so blue and fresh, as if washed by the breeze from the sea.

The sailor Papagris, surnamed Jean Bart, was sleeping in the bottom of the yacht; which he always prepared to put off at noon, when they did not go fishing in the morning.

“We have it to ourselves, mate !” cried Pierre, gaily, as he descended the iron ladder of the quay and jumped into the

boat. "What wind!" he added, eagerly, as he came near him.

"Still easterly, Mister Pierre," replied the sailor. "There's a splendid breeze outside."

"Well then, old man, let's push off at once."

They hoisted the foresail, raised the anchor, and the freed boat glided off slowly on the calm waters of the harbor. The faint breeze from the streets fell on the top of the sails so softly that it was imperceptible, and the *Perle* seemed animated by a life of its own—pushed on by a mysterious force within it. Pierre had taken the rudder; the cigar between his teeth, his legs stretched out on the seat, and with his eyes half closed under the blinding rays of the sun, he was watching the big pieces of tarred wood from the breakwater, as they glided past him.

As they rounded the point of the north pier that had sheltered them, the fresh breeze touched the hands and face of the

young doctor like a cold caress, and he filled his expanding lungs by drinking it in long, delicious draughts. The brown sail was suddenly inflated and rounded out, careening and wafting the boat along at all its speed. Jean Bart had now hoisted the jib, and its triangle, extended to the wind, resembled a wing that sped them along, skimming over the sea, with that soft noise of water that boils and rushes away, the bow plowing through the sea and raising waves of white foam that fell back dark and heavy as the plowed earth of the fields.

At each encountered wave—they were short and frequent—the *Perle* shuddered from the jib to the trembling rudder in Pierre's hands ; and at each fresh gust of wind the waves arose to the gunwale, as if eager to engulf the bark.

A coal steamer from Liverpool lay at anchor, waiting for the tide, and they made toward her, watching the busy sailors going to and fro on her deck. Then

they passed on, and for three happy hours Pierre, tranquil, calm and contented, wandered on the agitated waters, governing that thing of wood and canvas, as if it were a winged animal, rapid and docile, that came and went at his caprice under the pressure of his fingers.

He was dreaming, as we sometimes dream on horseback, or on the deck of a ship; thinking of his future that would be so beautiful, and of the pleasures of living intelligently. On the very next day he would ask his brother for the loan of those fifteen hundred francs for three months, that he might immediately take possession of that cozy suite of apartments on the Boulevard François I.

"There's the fog, Mister Pierre," broke in the old sailor, suddenly, "we'd better go in."

Pierre awoke from his reverie, and, raising his eyes, saw a gray mist in the north; a dense fog drowning the sky

and covering the sea, rushing toward them like a cloud fallen from above.

They put about and ran before the wind toward the pier, closely followed by the mist that gained rapidly upon them. When it overtook the *Perle*, enveloping her in its imperceptible thickness, and filling the atmosphere with that odor of smoke and moldiness peculiar to sea fogs, a cold shiver ran through Pierre's body and he quickly closed his lips, to shut out the taste of that damp and icy cloud.

When the yacht reached its accustomed place at the quay, the city was already enshrouded in that thin vapor, which, though it did not fall, dampened everything like a rain.

Pierre hurried home, uncomfortable and chilled, and threw himself on his bed, where he remained till summoned to dinner. As he entered the dining-room, his mother was saying to Jean:

“The conservatory will be charming. We shall fill it with flowers, and I will

take charge of them, and renew the plants when necessary. When you give parties, we'll light it up, and it will look like a real fairy land."

"What are you speaking of?" asked the young doctor.

"Of an elegant suite of apartments I have just rented for your brother," replied his mother, smiling. "A regular jewel, my dear. A first floor, opening on two streets, with two parlors, a conservatory, and a *rotonde* dining-room. Just the thing for a rich bachelor."

Pierre paled, and a sudden anger filled his heart. "Where is it situated?" he asked.

"On the Boulevard François I," she answered.

He no longer doubted, and sank back in his chair, so exasperated that he wanted to cry out: "This is too much! Is he to have everything?"

His mother, radiant with happiness, went on.

“And just imagine! I got it for two thousand eight hundred francs. They wanted three thousand, but I obtained the reduction by taking a lease for three, six, or nine years. Your brother will be so comfortable there, and besides, an elegant house makes the fortune of a lawyer. It attracts the client, charms and impresses him, inspires him with respect for the owner, and makes him understand that the advice of a man with such an establishment must be well paid for.”

After a few seconds of silence, she resumed: “We must find something like it for you; more modest, of course, since you are poor; but something small and cozy, for a nice place counts for a good deal.”

“Oh! as for me, I rely on hard work and science,” replied Pierre, disdainfully.

“That’s all very well,” insisted his mother, “but I assure you that pretty apartments are a great help to a professional man, all the same.”

“By-the-way, when did you meet this Maréchal?” he suddenly asked, looking at his father.

“Let me see,” said old Roland, scratching his head, reflectively, “I don’t quite remember, it’s so long ago. Ah! yes, I recollect, now. Your mother made his acquaintance in the shop; didn’t you, Louise? He came to order something, and returned frequently, afterward. He first came as a customer and then as a friend.”

“And when was that?” asked Pierre.

Roland reflected again, but remembered nothing more, and appealed to his wife.

“What year was it, Louise? You can’t have forgotten, you have such an excellent memory. Let me see, it was in — in — ’55 or ’56—. But why don’t you talk, Louise, you must remember?”

She did think for a few moments, then answered, in a quiet and firm voice:

“It was in ’58. Pierre was then three years old. I know I cannot be mistaken,

for it was the year he had the scarlet fever, and Maréchal, whom we knew but slightly then, was of great assistance."

"Yes, yes! that's it," cried Roland, "and he was a great help, indeed. As your mother was worn out with fatigue, and I was busy at the shop, he always went out for your medicine. He was a good friend, indeed. And you can't imagine how delighted he was when you were well again, and how he did kiss you. From that time we were great friends."

This abrupt and violent thought suddenly pierced Pierre's heart like a lacerating ball. "Since he knew me first, and loved me so, why did he leave all his fortune to my brother, and nothing to me? and, besides, was I not the cause of his great intimacy with my parents?"

He asked no more questions, but remained gloomy and absorbed in reflection during the rest of the meal; filled with a new uneasiness, the secret germ of a new disease.

He went out early and wandered aimlessly through the streets. The city was still enshrouded in the mist, rendering the night sultry and uncomfortable, as if a pestilential breath had fallen on the earth. It could be seen floating under the gas-lights, almost obscuring the light at times. The pavements were as slippery as on a frosty night, and the atmosphere seemed filled with all the bad odors emitted from cellars, gutters, sewers and filthy kitchens, mingled with the intolerable smell of that roving fog.

Pierre walked on, with his eyes on the ground and his hands in his pockets, until he could no longer endure this oppressing atmosphere; then, shivering with cold, he entered old Marowsko's shop.

He found the chemist sleeping, as usual, under the single gas-jet. On recognizing Pierre, whom he loved with the attachment of a faithful dog, he shook off his torpor and produced two glasses, with a bottle of "*groseille*."

“Well,” asked the Doctor, “how are you getting on with your *liqueur*?”

The old chemist then explained how four of the principal *cafés* of the city had consented to introduce it, and how the editors of the *Phare de la Cote* and the *Semaphore Havrais* had offered to advertise it in exchange for certain pharmaceutical preparations.

Then, after a long silence, Marowsko asked if Jean had really come into possession of the inheritance; afterward adding two or three vague questions on the same subject. His jealous affection for Pierre revolted against this preference; and from his averted glance, his hesitating voice and in the phrases that arose to his lips, but which he was too timid and prudent to utter, Pierre believed he saw the suspicion that filled his mind.

He was quite sure that the old man was thinking, reproachfully: “You should not have allowed him to accept an inheritance that will compromise your mother’s

honor." Perhaps he even believed that Jean was Maréchal's son. Indeed, he must believe it! Why not? the thing seemed so probable and evident; when he, Pierre, her son, had been struggling for three days with all his might, with all the subtleties of his heart, to deceive his reason. Was he not himself battling against this terrible suspicion?

And again the need of being alone to think over, to discuss this with himself, to face boldly, without scruples, without weakness, this possible and monstrous thing, came over him so strongly that he arose, pressed the hand of the astounded chemist, and, without even stopping to drink his glass of "*groseille*," plunged again into the dark foggy night, repeating: "Why did Maréchal leave all his fortune to Jean!"

It was no longer jealousy that drove him on, neither was it that base and natural envy he knew to be hidden within him, and which he had struggled against these

three days, but it was the terror of a frightful thing, the terror of believing that Jean, his brother, was the son of that man !

No, he did not believe it; he could not even entertain that criminal doubt ! Nevertheless, it was necessary that this suspicion, so light and so improbable, should be cast from him, completely and forever. He must dispel these doubts, he must regain his former confidence, for his mother was the only being that he loved in all the world.

And now, alone, as he wandered through the night, he would make a thorough investigation into his doubts and recollections, from which would surely result the vindication of his mother. Then it would be over; he would never think of it again, no, nevermore. Then he could sleep in peace.

“Let me first examine the facts clearly,” he thought. “I shall by that means bring to mind all that I know of

him, of his manner toward my brother and myself. I will search for the causes that could have resulted in this preference: He saw Jean come into the world — yes, but he already knew me. Had he loved my mother with a secret and reserved love, he would have preferred me, since it was through me, through my illness that he became intimate with my parents. Therefore, he should have chosen me, and should have had a more tender affection for me; unless that, having seen my brother grow up from infancy, he had conceived an instinctive predilection for him.”

Then he searched his memory with desperation; concentrating all his mind, all his intellectual power in the reconstruction and penetration of the man; that man who had passed before him, indifferent to his heart, during all the years in Paris.

But he felt that walking, even the light movement of his footsteps, troubled his ideas, disturbed their concentration,

weakened their focus and clouded his memory.

To cast on the past and on those unknown events, that sharp light from which nothing escapes, it was necessary that he should be motionless and in a vast empty space. He decided to go and seat himself on the pier, as he had done the other night.

As he approached the harbor he could hear from the open sea, a plaintive and sinister moan, like the bellowing of a bull, but more prolonged and powerful. It was the cry of a siren, the voice of ships lost in the fog.

A shudder ran through him, contracting his heart, as this cry of distress resounded through his soul and in his nerves, almost believing it had come from his own lips. Another voice similar to the first, moaned in its turn a little further off; then closer by, the siren of the harbor responded with an agonizing shriek.

Pierre hurried along into this lugubrious and moaning darkness until he reached the extremity of the pier. Then closing his eyes to shut out the glare of the electric lights — now veiled in mist — which render the port accessible at night, and the red fire of the light-house on the south pier, which, however, was scarcely distinguishable, he turned half round to lean his elbows on the granite and buried his face in his hands.

Though his lips did not move, his thoughts incessantly repeated: “*Maréchal*,” “*Maréchal*,” as if to recall, to evoke and provoke his shadow. And within his closed eyelids, he suddenly saw him as he had known him. He was a man of sixty, with a pointed white beard and thick eye-brows that were white also. He was neither tall nor short, had soft, gray eyes, a modest demeanor, an affable air and the aspect of a simple, affectionate being. He called Pierre and Jean “*My dear children* ;”

never seeming to prefer one to the other, and often received them to dinner.

And Pierre, with the tenacity of a dog following an evaporated scent, began to search the words, gestures, intonations and looks of this man disappeared from the earth. He refound him, little by little, in his entirety, in his apartments on the Rue Tronchet as when his brother and himself dined with him.

Two old servants, who had long ago, no doubt, taken the habit of saying "Monsieur Pierre" and "Monsieur Jean," waited on them.

On their arrival, Maréchal would extend both hands to the young men; the right to one, the left to the other, at hazard, saying: "Good day, my children, have you any news from your parents? They do not write to me any more."

They would then converse in a friendly way on the topics of the day. He was not more brilliant than the average of men, but he was kind, agreeable, and full

of tact. He was assuredly a good friend to them, one of those friends of whom we think but little, because we feel so sure of their affection.

Pierre's mind was now full of recollections concerning him. Seeing him thoughtful on many occasions, and guessing that the student had already spent his allowance, Maréchal had spontaneously offered and loaned him some money—a few hundred francs, perhaps, soon forgotten by both, and never returned. Therefore it was evident that this man had always loved him, and felt interested in him, since he troubled himself about his needs. Then—then why had he left all his fortune to Jean? No, he had never been visibly more affectionate toward his brother than toward himself, neither had he appeared more interested in one than in the other. Then—then—he must have had a powerful and secret reason to give everything to Jean—everything—and nothing to Pierre.

The more he reflected, and the more he revived the past, the more improbable and incredible seemed this difference established between them.

And a sharp pain, an inexpressible anguish entered his breast, rending his heart into shreds. The springs seemed broken, and the blood rushed through it in torrents, shaking and tossing it tumultuously.

Then, in a choking voice, as if talking in a nightmare, he murmured: "I must know, my God, I must know!"

He now went further back into the past, in the days long ago, when his parents resided in Paris. But the faces escaped him, and this confused his recollections. He strove eagerly to remember Maréchal with blonde, brown or black hair; but all in vain; the last figure of this man, the figure of his old age, had effaced the others. He, nevertheless, remembered that he was then more slender, that his hand was soft and that he

often brought flowers, very often; for his father incessantly repeated: "What! more flowers! why, it is folly, my friend; you will ruin yourself in roses." And Maréchal would reply: "Never mind; it pleases me."

And, suddenly, the voice of his mother, of his mother smiling and saying, "Thanks, my friend," came back to his mind so vividly that he believed he again heard it. She must have pronounced these three words very often to engrave them so vividly in his memory.

Then Maréchal, the rich gentleman, the customer, brought flowers to this little shop-woman, to the wife of a modest jeweler. Did he love her? Why should he have become the friend of these shopkeepers if he did not love the wife? He was an educated and refined man. How many times he had talked of poets and poetry with Pierre! He did not appreciate writers as an artist, but as an emotional man; and the young doctor had

often smiled at those emotions which he considered somewhat stupid. He now understood why this sentimental man never could have been his father's friend, his father who was so common-place, so matter-of-fact, and to whom the word "poetry" was equivalent to stupidities.

Thus this Maréchal, young, rich, generous and ready to fall in love, had by chance entered a shop one day and remarked the pretty shop-woman. He had purchased, had returned, chatted, becoming more and more familiar from day to day, and had paid, by frequent purchases, the right of seating himself at their fire-side, of smiling to the young woman, and of pressing the hand of the husband.

And then — and then — Oh ! my God — then ?

He had loved and caressed the first child, the jeweler's child, until the birth of the other ; then he had remained impenetrable until death. And when the grave had closed over him, his flesh de-

composed, his name become effaced from the list of the living, and his entire being disappeared for ever, then, having nothing more to fear or to hide, he had given his whole fortune to the second child! — But why? — He was a man of intelligence — he should have understood and foreseen that he might, that he would almost infallibly lead everybody to suppose that this child was his — therefore, he would be dishonoring a woman. Why should he have done this if Jean were not his son?

And suddenly a precise and terrible recollection came to him. Maréchal had been fair, as fair as Jean. He now remembered a miniature portrait of him, often seen on the chimney-piece of their parlor in Paris. Where was it now? Lost or hidden! Oh! if he could only hold it in his hand for a second! His mother had perhaps hidden it in a secret drawer with other relics of her love.

His distress at this thought became so

poignant that a moan escaped from his lips, one of those short, plaintive cries that sharp pains wring from the heart. And suddenly the siren of the pier howled near him, as if she had heard and understood him, and was moaning in response. Its savage and formidable clamor, more resounding than the thunder, made to dominate the voice of the wind and of the waves, floated into the night over the invisible sea in its shroud of mist, like the roaring of a supernatural monster.

Then, through the fog, far and near, arose similar cries, and those appeals, uttered by blinded ships, seemed frightful in the night.

Then all was again silent.

Pierre had opened his eyes and was looking around him in astonishment, as if awakened from a nightmare and surprised to find himself there.

“Why, I am mad ;” he thought, “I suspect my mother.” And a flood of love and tenderness, of repentance, of prayer

and of desolation, drowned his heart. His mother ! Knowing her as he did, how could he have suspected her ? Was not the soul, was not the life of this simple, chaste and loyal woman more transparent than water ? Having seen and known her, how was it possible to suspect her ? And, it was he, her son, who had doubted her ! Oh ! if he could have taken her in his arms at this moment, how he would have embraced and caressed her, how he would have fallen on his knees before her to beg her forgiveness.

Could she have deceived his father ? — His father ! It was true that he was an honest, an honorable man, but his mind had never soared beyond the horizon of his shop. How could this woman, who was then very pretty, as he remembered and could still see, and gifted with a delicate, affectionate and tender soul, have accepted as a husband a man so different from herself ?

But why search ? She had married him

as all young girls marry the well-to-do young man chosen by their parents. They had immediately established themselves in their shop in the Rue Montmartre, and the young wife presided at the counter, animated by the possession of a new home, by that sacred and subtle sense of common interests, that replaces love and even affection in the majority of marriages among the shop-keepers of Paris. She had worked with all the activity of her fine intelligence for the success of their business. And thus her life had glided on, uniform, tranquil, respectable, and without love.

Without love? Was it possible that a woman should live without love? A woman, young and pretty, living in Paris, reading novels, applauding actresses who died of love on the stage; could she have gone from youth to old age without one single passion? Of another he would not believe it; why should he believe it of his mother?

Certainly, she might have loved, as well as another! for why should she be different from others, even if she were his mother?

She had been young, and had experienced all the poetic nonsense that troubles the hearts of young people. Imprisoned in the shop, her only companion a vulgar husband, who spoke of nothing but trade; she had dreamed of moonlight walks, of travels, and of kisses given in the shadows of the night. And then, one day, a man had appeared, as lovers do in novels, and had spoken as they speak.

She had loved him, and why not? She was his mother. Well, should he be blind and stupid enough to reject the evidence, because she was his mother?

Had she given herself to him?—Undoubtedly, since this man had had no other friend;—since he had remained faithful to her, even when she was at a distance and had grown old;—since he

had left all his fortune to her son, to their son!——

And Pierre arose, trembling with such fury that he wanted to kill somebody! His arm extended, his hand wide open, ready to strike, to bruise, to crush, to strangle! Who? Everybody, his father, his brother, the dead, his mother!

He rushed blindly toward home. What was he about to do?

As he passed a tower near the signal post, the siren shrieked its piercing cry almost in his ear. His surprise was so violent that he recoiled and almost fell against the granite parapet.

The steamer that responded seemed very close, and, in fact, was entering the port with the high tide.

Pierre turned and perceived its red eye obscured by fog; then, under the diffused light of the electric fires of the port, a dark shadow was seen gliding between the two piers. Then, behind him, the hoarse voice of the guard called out:

“ The name of the ship ? ”

And from out of the fog the voice of the pilot, hoarse, also, responded: “ *Santa-Lucia.* ”

“ The country ? ”

“ Italy. ”

“ The port ? ”

“ Naples. ”

Then, before Pierre's troubled eyes, arose a vision of the fiery crater of Vesuvius, and at the foot of the volcano he saw the orange groves of Lorrento or Castellamare. How often he had dreamed of those familiar names, as if he had known the country. Oh! if he could only go, at once, no matter where, and never return, never write, never let them know what had become of him! But no; he must return home, go back to the paternal house and go to bed.

No, he would not return yet, he would await daylight. The voices of the sirens pleased him. He arose and walked up and down like an officer on duty.

Another enormous and mysterious ship came on behind the first. It was an English steamer returning from India.

He saw several others emerging, one after another, out of the impenetrable shadows. Then as the dampness of the fog was becoming intolerable, Pierre went on toward the city. He was so cold that he entered a sailor's tavern for a glass of grog; and when the hot and peppery brandy had burned his palate and throat, hope revived within him.

He had been mistaken, perhaps. He knew his vagabond imagination so well! No doubt he was deceived. He had accumulated the proofs as we build up an indictment against an innocent person; always so easy to condemn when we wish to believe him guilty. After a good night's sleep he would certainly think otherwise.

Having reached this conclusion he hastened home, and, by mere force of will he at last fell into unconsciousness.

CHAPTER V.

PIERRE tossed about restlessly on his bed, for an hour or two, in the agitation of a troubled sleep. When he awoke, in the obscurity of his chamber, even before thought had been rekindled within him, he felt that painful oppression, that uneasiness of soul that survives even in sleep. It seemed as if the calamity, the shock of which merely hurt him the previous day, had, during his rest, glided into his very flesh, bruising and harassing it like a fever. Remembrance came back to him now and made him start up suddenly.

Then he went over, one by one, all the arguments that had tortured his heart on the pier, while the sirens cried so loudly. And the more he thought the less he doubted. He felt himself drawn on by his logic as if by a hand that

enticed and forced him toward the terrible certainty.

He was hot, thirsty, and his heart was beating fast. He arose and opened the window to breathe the cool night air, and as he turned back to his bed a faint noise from the next room attracted his attention.

Jean was tranquilly sleeping, and snoring softly. He could sleep! He had no misgivings; he had guessed nothing. A man who had known their mother had left him his entire fortune; and he took the money without question, finding it but just and natural that it should be his.

He was calmly sleeping, rich and satisfied, unconscious of the suffering and distress that harassed his brother. And a sudden hatred arose within him against this indifferent and contented dreamer.

Even the day before, he would have knocked at the door and entered unhesitatingly; then, seating himself by the bed, he would have said to him in the confu-

sion of his sudden awakening: "Jean, you must give up this legacy, which may cast suspicion on our mother's honor."

But to-day it was too late, he could not speak ; he could not tell Jean that he did not believe him the son of their father. He must now bury this disgrace within himself, hide this stain from all eyes and let no one suspect it, not even his brother—his brother, above all.

He no longer cared for the opinion of the public. The whole world might accuse his mother, what mattered, provided he knew her innocent, he alone. How could he bear to live near her all the days of his life, and believe every time he looked at her that she had begotten his brother by the caress of a stranger.

How calm and serene she was, nevertheless, how self satisfied, in fact ! Was it possible that a woman like her, with her purity of soul and uprightness of heart, could fall, through passion, without

later feeling remorse, the stings of a troubled conscience.

Ah ! she had undoubtedly been tortured by remorse in the first days, then it had grown less and less, finally becoming effaced as all things do. No doubt she had wept over her fault, and then, little by little, had almost forgotten it. Have not all women that prodigious faculty of forgetting, which permits them in a few years, to pass the man to whom they have given their life and themselves, without even a thought. The kiss strikes like a thunderbolt, love passes like a shower; then life again resumed its tranquillity like the sky. Do we remember a passing cloud ?

Pierre could no longer remain in his room ! This house — his father's house — crushed him. He felt the weight of the roof on his head, and the walls suffocated him. Being very thirsty, he lighted his candle and went down to the kitchen for a glass of fresh water.

He descended to the first floor and filling a pitcher with it he returned to the stairway, where the circulating air had cooled the atmosphere, and seating himself on the first steps, he drank the cooling liquid in long draughts like an exhausted runner. When he had ceased to move, the silence of the house oppressed him; then, little by little, the faintest noise became audible. First it was the dining-room clock whose ticking seemed louder with every second. Then he distinguished the painful and labored breathing of an old person—his father no doubt; and the thought that these two men sleeping so peacefully under the same roof were nothing to each other, contracted his heart as if the conviction had just come to him. No link, not even the slightest, united them, and they knew it not. They spoke affectionately to each other, embraced, were rejoiced and moved by the same things as if the same blood flowed in their veins. And two persons, born at

the two extremities of the earth, could not be greater strangers to each other than this father and son. They believed they loved each other because a lie had grown between them. It was a lie that made this paternal and filial love, a lie impossible to unveil and that no one would ever know but him — the true son.

And yet, and yet if he should be deceived? How could he find out? Oh! if a resemblance, however slight, only existed between his father and Jean; one of those mysterious resemblances transmitted from generation to generation, showing that a whole race descends directly from the same source. It would require so little to be recognizable to the experienced eye of a physician, the form of the jaw, the curve of the nose, the position of the eyes, the nature of the teeth or of the hair, or even a gesture; a habit, a manner, an inherited taste, or a characteristic sign of whatever kind would have been sufficient.

He searched, but he could recall nothing; no, nothing. However, having had no reason to search for these imperceptible indications he had never observed closely.

He went slowly up the stairs, still thinking. As he passed his brother's door he stopped short, and involuntarily extended his hand to open it. An imperious desire to see Jean at once, seized him; to examine him closely, to surprise him in his sleep while the features were distended in repose, while all expression of life had disappeared. He would thus seize the sleeping secret of his physiognomy, and if any appreciable resemblance existed, it would not escape him.

But if Jean awoke, what would he say? How would he explain his presence there? He remained standing there, his fingers clutching the knob and searching for a reason or a pretext.

He suddenly remembered that a few days previous he had loaned his brother

a vial of laudanum to calm an aching tooth. Might he not need it himself to-night, and come in to get it. He then entered, but with the stealthy step of a thief.

Jean, with his lips slightly parted, was sleeping soundly ; his fair hair and beard appearing like a spot of gold on the white pillow. He did not awake, but his heavy breathing ceased.

Pierre bent over and contemplated him with a searching eye. No, this young man did not resemble a Roland ; and for the second time the remembrance of Maréchal's portrait came to his mind. He must find it! Perhaps when he saw it he would doubt no longer.

His brother moved, disturbed, no doubt, by his presence or by the rays of the candle penetrating his eye-lids. Then Pierre walked softly back to the door, closed it noiselessly and returned to his own room, but not to his bed.

The day was slow in coming. The

hours struck, one after the other, with a deep and solemn sound, as if that little instrument of clock-work in the dining-room had swallowed a cathedral bell. The tones ascended the empty stairway, pierced the walls and doors, and died away in the deaf ears of the sleepers. Pierre resumed his agitated walk between his bed and the window. What would he do? He felt too much disturbed to spend the day at home with the family. He must be alone until to-morrow, at least; he must reflect, calm and fortify himself for the daily life he must now resume.

Very well; he would go to Trouville, and watch the gay crowd on the sea-shore. It would amuse him, change the current of his thoughts, and give him time to prepare himself to bear in silence the horrible discovery he had made.

As soon as daylight appeared he dressed himself. The mist had evaporated under the rays of the rising sun, and

the morning was beautiful. As the boat did not leave for Trouville until nine o'clock, he would have to kiss his mother before leaving.

He awaited her usual rising hour, and then went down to her room; his heart beat so violently as he reached the door that he was obliged to stop to catch his breath. His hand trembled so much that he was almost incapable of the slight effort required to turn the knob and enter. He knocked, and the voice of his mother asked: "Who is it?"

"It is I, Pierre," he replied.

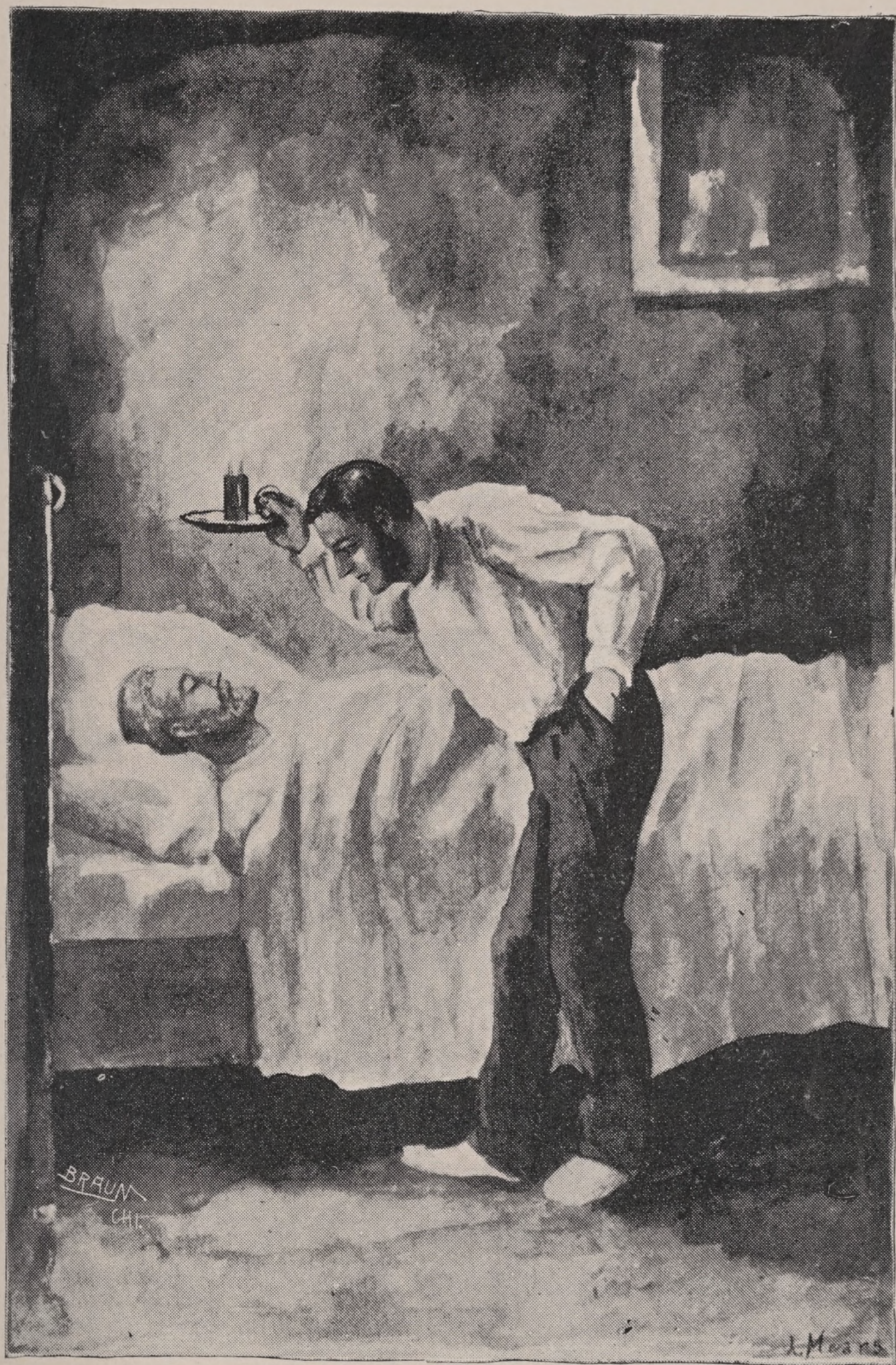
"What do you want?" she asked.

"To say good-by, as I am going to spend the day at Trouville with some friends."

"But I am still in bed," she said.

"Very well; I will not disturb you then. I can kiss you when I return this evening."

He hoped he might leave without seeing her; without imprinting upon her



cheek that false kiss, so repugnant to his feelings.

“ I will open the door,” she called out, “ and then you wait a moment while I return to bed.”

He heard her bare feet on the floor, and then the slight noise of the key in the lock; then she bade him come in.

When he entered she was sitting up in the bed, while at her side, with his face to the wall and a silk handkerchief over his head, Roland was sleeping soundly. Nothing but a violent shaking ever awoke him. On his fishing days the sailor Papagris would call the servant at the appointed hour, and she in turn would tear her master from his invincible slumber.

As he went toward her, Pierre looked at his mother, and it suddenly seemed to him that he had never seen her before.

She offered her cheeks, and he kissed her, then sat down beside the bed on a low chair.

"Did you decide to go last night?" she asked.

"Yes, last night," he replied.

"You will be back to dinner?" she continued.

"I do not know yet. But you need not wait."

He was examining her with a stupefied curiosity. This woman was his mother! That whole figure seen from his infancy, that smile, that voice so well known and so familiar, suddenly appeared strange to him, different from what they had been until then. He now understood that, loving her, he had never examined her features closely. He knew well all the little details of her countenance, but he now saw them clearly for the first time. His anxious eyes searched the loved features, revealing them in a new light, with an expression he had never before discovered.

He started to go, then suddenly giving away to the invincible desire of obtaining

that knowledge which had been devouring his heart since the previous night, he said:

“I think I remember having seen a small portrait of Maréchal in our parlor at Paris.”

She hesitated for a moment or two; or, at least, he imagined she hesitated; then she replied:

“Why, yes, we had one.”

“What has become of it?” he asked, eagerly.

“That portrait — wait,” she answered, hesitatingly. “I don’t quite remember — perhaps it is in my desk.”

“I wish you would try to find it,” he rejoined.

“I will look for it,” she said; “why do you want it?”

“Oh! it is not for myself,” he said, quickly. “I thought it would be only natural to give it to Jean, and it would please him.”

“Yes, you are right,” she said; “it is

a good idea. I will look for it as soon as I am up."

He kissed her again, hurriedly, and went out.

The sky was blue and there was not a breath of wind. Everybody he met seemed in high spirits; the merchants going to their business; the professional men to their offices; the young girls to the shops; all seemed enlivened by the beauty of the day.

The passengers were already embarking for Trouville when Pierre reached the boat.

"Was she troubled by my question about the portrait," he was asking himself, "or was it only surprise? Has she lost or hidden it? Does she or does she not know where it is? Why should she hide it?"

And his thoughts still following the same course, from deduction to deduction, arrived at this conclusion.

The portrait of this friend or lover had

remained in the parlor until the day when the wife, or the mother, had, for the first time, perceived that the portrait resembled her son. She had, undoubtedly, long watched for this resemblance; then having discovered it, having seen its birth, and understanding that any one might, one day or another, also perceive it, she had hidden this formidable little painting, not daring to destroy it.

And Pierre now remembered that this portrait had disappeared long ago; long before their departure from Paris. It had disappeared, he believed, when Jean's beard began to grow, suddenly giving him a strong resemblance to the fair young man smiling in the frame.

The movement of the departing boat troubled and dispersed his thoughts, and he looked around him at the sea.

The little steamer soon emerged from between the piers, turned to the left, puffing and shivering, and made for the distant hills barely visible in the early mist.

From time to time they passed the red sail of a clumsy fishing boat, motionless on the calm sea, and appearing like a big rock emerging from the water. And the Seine descending from Rouen seemed like an immense arm of the sea separating two neighboring countries.

In less than an hour they arrived at the port of Trouville, and as it was time for bathing, Pierre proceeded at once to the beach.

From a distance it looked like a long garden filled with dazzling flowers. On the long stretch of yellow sand, from the pier to the Roches-Noires, were parasols of all colors, hats of every shape, toilets of every shade, in groups in front of the cabins, in lines along the beach or dispersed here and there, really resembling enormous bouquets on a boundless prairie. The confused murmur of voices carried on the light breeze from far and near, the calls, the cries of the bathing children and the joyous laughter of the

women made a continual hum that mingled with the soft, insensible breeze, and fell on the ear like a gay melody.

Pierre walked in the midst of these people, more lost and isolated, more deeply immersed in his torturing thoughts, and more apart from them than if he had been thrown into the sea from the deck of a ship a hundred leagues from the shore. He brushed against them, heard the voices without knowing what was said, and without noticing the compliments of the men and the smiles of the women.

But suddenly he awoke from his torpor and looked around on this gay throng; and a hatred arose in his heart against them, because they seemed so happy and contented.

Then his thoughts again turned into a new channel, and he mingled with the groups of pleasure-seekers. All those varied colored toilets dotting the sands like bright flowers, the pretty fabrics, the

conspicuous parasols, the fictitious grace of the imprisoned waists; all the ingenious inventions of fashion, from the dainty shoe to the extravagant hat, the charm of gestures, voice and smile, in a word all the coquetry displayed on this beach suddenly appeared to his eyes like an immense exhibit of feminine perversity. All these women were decked to please, charm and tempt some one. They had beautified themselves to attract men; all men except their husbands, whom they no longer cared to charm. They had adorned themselves to please the lover of to-day or of to-morrow; for the unknown whom they had met, remarked and, perhaps, awaited. For those men seated at their side, whose looks and words burned with passion and desire; and who pursued them with the ardor and patience of a hunter chasing a shy and wary animal.

These vast downs were then only a market-place for lovers, where some sold and others gave themselves; some bar-

tered, while others simply promised their caresses. All these women were animated by the same thought—the desire of offering the caresses that were already given, promised or sold to another. And Pierre reflected bitterly that women were the same in every station of life.

His mother had done like others, that was all! Like others? No! there were many—many exceptions! These women around him were rich, foolish and in search of lovers; they belonged to the elegant world, or even, perhaps, to the *demi-monde*; for, on this beach, crowded with idle people, one does not see the devoted wife and mother.

The tide was coming in, chasing the bathers toward the city. The groups also dispersed, taking up their seats hurriedly and running before the yellow wave fringed with white foam. The movable bathing-cabins, drawn by horses, were also removed from the reach of the sea; and the elegant throng on the prom-

enade was now all haste and confusion, forming two contrary currents elbowing and jostling each other. Pierre, nervous and exasperated by this confusion, turned his steps toward the city and entered a small wine shop on the outskirts, where he breakfasted.

When he had taken his coffee, he stretched himself on two chairs before the door, and as he had slept but little the night before, he soon fell into a sound sleep under the cool shade of the linden-trees.

After a few hours of rest he awoke, and consulting his watch, saw that he had barely time to return to the boat; he set off at once in the direction of the quay, oppressed by a painful weariness that had come over him during his sleep. He was now anxious to reach home and learn if his mother had found Maréchal's portrait. "Would she be the first to speak of it," he asked himself, "or would he be obliged to inquire for it again?"

If she did not mention it herself, it must be that she had a secret reason to keep it hidden.

But when he reached his own room, he hesitated. His troubled heart had not yet had time to calm its agitation, and he dreaded meeting her. By a strong effort, however, he controlled his feelings and made his appearance in the dining-room as the rest of the family was sitting down to dinner.

“Well!” old Roland was saying gaily, “how are you getting on with your purchases? As for me, I don’t want to see anything till the house is all furnished.”

“Oh, we are getting on well,” replied his wife, smiling; “but it takes a long time to choose everything properly, and we are anxious to have all in good taste.”

She had spent the day in visiting paper hangers and furniture stores with Jean. She wanted rich and pompous

hangings and furniture; something to strike the eye; while her son, on the contrary, desired everything simple and elegant. And at each proposed purchase they repeated all their arguments. She claimed that it was important that the client on entering the offices should be impressed by his rich surroundings.

Jean, on the contrary, caring only for the patronage of the rich and elegant class, wished to impress by his modest and refined taste.

And the discussion that had lasted all day was resumed with their soup.

Roland, who had no opinions on the matter, repeated: "I don't want to hear anything about it, but will go and see it when it is all ready."

Mme. Roland now appealed to the judgment of her elder son.

"Now, Pierre, what do you think of it?" she asked.

His nerves were so unstrung that he

almost replied with an oath, but, mastering his emotion, he said drily, his voice trembling with irritation :

“ Oh ! I am of Jean’s opinion. I love simplicity, for simplicity is to taste what uprightness is to character.”

“ But you must remember that we are living in a provincial city,” she rejoined, “ where good taste is not much appreciated.”

“ And is that a reason why we should imitate fools ? ” said Pierre, angrily. “ If my neighbors are stupid or dishonest, am I obliged to follow their example ? A woman is not obliged to commit a fault simply because her neighbors have lovers.”

“ Your arguments and comparisons sound as if drawn from the maxims of a moralist,” laughed Jean.

Pierre made no reply, and his mother and brother resumed their discussion on drapings and furniture.

He watched them curiously, as he had

watched his mother in the morning before his departure for Trouville, seeing them with the eyes of an observing stranger who is suddenly transferred to the midst of an unknown family.

His father, especially, astonished his eyes and thoughts. This big indolent man, contented and stupid, was his father! No, Jean certainly resembled him in nothing.

His family! Since two days an unknown and malevolent hand, the hand of a dead man, had broken, one by one, all the links that held these four beings together. It was all over. He no longer had a mother, for he could not cherish and venerate her with that tender, pious, and absolute respect, which should fill a son's heart; he no longer had a brother, since that brother was the child of a stranger; his father alone remained; that big man whom he did not love.

"Did you find that portrait, mother?" he asked, suddenly.

“Which portrait?” she asked, her eyes opening in surprise.

“Maréchal’s portrait,” he replied.

“No — that is, yes — I have not found it, she replied, “but I think I know where it is.”

“What was that,” asked Roland.

“A small portrait of Maréchal,” Pierre explained; “it used to hang in our parlor at Paris. I thought Jean might like to have it.”

“Ah! yes, yes, I remember it perfectly,” cried Roland. “Why, I saw it only a couple of weeks ago. Your mother took it out of her secretary while arranging her papers. You must remember Louise; why, come to think of it, it was only Thursday or Friday of last week. I was shaving myself, when you took it out of a drawer and put it on a chair beside you with a lot of letters, half of which you afterward burned. Humph! how queer that you should have had that portrait in your hands scarcely three days before

Jean's inheritance came. If I believed in presentiments, I should say that was one."

"Yes, yes, I know where it is," she replied, tranquilly; "I will get it by-and-by."

Then she had lied! she had lied to her son that morning, when he asked her what had become of that portrait, and she had replied: "I don't quite remember, perhaps it is in my desk."

She had seen, touched, handled and contemplated it a few days before, then she had again hidden it in a secret drawer with letters—with his letters.

Pierre looked at his mother with the exasperated anger of a deceived son, robbed of his most sacred affections, and with the jealousy of a man who has long been blind and suddenly discovers a shameful treachery. If he, her son, had been the husband of this woman, he would have seized her by the wrists, by the shoulders, or by the hair, he would have struck her to the ground, bruised

and crushed! And he could say, do, show or reveal nothing. He was only her son; he had nothing to avenge, for he was not the deceived one.

But yes! she had deceived him in his love and in his filial respect for her. For to him, she should be above reproach, as all mothers should be to their children. If the fury aroused within him was so near to hatred, it was that he felt her to be more guilty toward him than even toward his father.

The love between man and wife is a voluntary compact, and the one who weakens is only guilty of perfidy; but when the wife becomes a mother, her obligations are greater, since nature has confided a race to her. And if she then succumbs, she is base, unworthy and infamous!

“After all,” suddenly said old Roland, stretching his legs under the table, as he always did after dinner, to sip his glass of wine, “it is not half bad to live without

working when we have a fair income. I hope that Jean will give us fine dinners now, even if I do run the risk of making myself sick." Then, turning to his wife, he continued:

"I wish you would get that portrait, my dear, now that you are through your dinner. I am quite anxious to see it again."

She arose without a word, took up a candle and went out. After an absence, which seemed intolerably long to Pierre, but which, in fact, was less than three minutes, she returned smiling, and holding an old-fashioned gilded frame by the ring.

"There," she said, quietly. "I found it immediately."

Pierre was the first to extend his hand for the portrait, and, holding it at arm's length, examined it closely. Then, feeling his mother's eyes on him, he looked from it to his brother, comparing the latter with the portrait, and in his rage he

almost cried out : "It does resemble Jean!" If he dared not pronounce these redoubtable words, he nevertheless manifested his thought by his manner of comparing the living and the painted features.

There certainly existed something in common between the two ; the same beard and the same forehead, but nothing precise enough to permit him to declare : "They are father and son." It was rather a family resemblance, the similarity of physiognomy which pervades the same blood. But something more decisive than this resemblance of feature struck Pierre. His mother had arisen and turned her back under the pretense of putting away the sugar and wine into the side-board. She then understood that he knew or at least suspected the truth.

"Let me see it," said Roland.

Pierre handed him the miniature, and the old man pulled the candle closer to him, that he might see it better.

"Poor fellow!" he murmured, in a sad

tone, "to think that he looked like that when we first knew him. *Cristi!* how fast time goes. He was a handsome man at that time, and had such pleasant manners, didn't he, Louise?"

As his wife made no response, he went on: "And what an even temper he had! I never saw him in bad humor. And to think it's all over; nothing left—except what he left to Jean. In a word, we must say that he was a good and faithful friend to the end. He did not even forget us in death."

Jean in his turn took the portrait, and, contemplating it a few moments, said, regretfully: "I cannot recognize him at all. I only remember him with white hair."

And he returned the miniature to his mother. She looked at it with a rapid, furtive glance that was mingled with fear; then she said in her natural voice: "It is yours now, my Jeannot, since you are his heir. We must take it to your new home."

She then entered the parlor and placed the miniature portrait on the chimney-piece, near the clock, where it had formerly been.

Roland filled his pipe, while Pierre and Jean lighted cigarettes; the latter sunk into a deep arm-chair and crossed his legs indolently, and Pierre walked up and down the room, while the father seated himself astride his chair as usual, and spat into the fire-place.

Mme. Roland, seated on a low chair near the little table that held the lamp, either knitted, embroidered or marked linen.

This evening she was commencing a piece of tapestry destined to the embellishment of Jean's bedroom. It was a difficult and complicated work, requiring her whole attention. Nevertheless, from time to time, she raised her eyes furtively from the stitches she was counting to the miniature of the dead that stood on the chimney-piece. And the young doctor,

walking rapidly up and down the narrow parlor, his hands behind his back and cigarette between his lips, lost none of those stolen glances.

Both seemed to realize that a struggle had begun, and they watched each other anxiously; a painful uneasiness, an unbearable uneasiness contracting Pierre's heart. Satisfied, yet tortured, he was saying to himself: "How she must suffer at this moment if she knows that I have guessed;" and each time he passed the fire-place, he stopped to contemplate the fair-haired Maréchal that she might understand that he was haunted by a fixed idea. This little portrait, scarcely as large as the open hand, seemed like a redoubtable living person suddenly placed in the midst of this family.

Suddenly a ring was heard at the door. Mme. Roland, usually so calm, started at the sound, thereby revealing her nervousness to the young doctor.

“It must be Mme. Rosémilly,” she said, and her anxious eye was raised once more to the chimney.

Pierre understood, or thought he understood, her terror and anguish. The look of a woman is piercing, her mind active, and her thoughts suspicious. When Mme. Rosémilly entered, she would perceive the unknown miniature at a first glance, and perhaps even discover the resemblance between it and Jean. Then she would know and understand all ! A sudden and horrible fear that this disgrace should be unveiled came over him, and, as the door opened, he turned, and, taking the little portrait, hid it behind the clock before his father or brother had time to see him.

As he turned, he again met the eyes of his mother, they seemed changed, troubled and haggard.

“Good-evening,” Mme. Rosémilly was saying, “I have come down to take a cup of tea with you.”

While the rest of the family came forward to greet her, Pierre disappeared through the still opened door.

When they perceived his departure they all expressed their astonishment; Jean, fearing that the young widow might feel hurt, was greatly vexed.

“What a bear!” he muttered.

“You must not pay any attention to him,” said his mother, apologizingly; “he is not well, and, besides, his trip to Trouville has tired him.”

“That is no reason why he should act like an uncivilized being;” growled old Roland.

“Oh!” said Mme. Rosémilly, trying to smooth matters, “he simply took his leave ‘*a l’ anglaise*,’ that is how society people do when they wish to retire early.”

“Oh!” said Jean, “in the world it is possible; but one should not treat his family *a l’ anglaise*, as my brother has done for the last few days.”

CHAPTER VI.

THINGS went on thus in the Roland family for a week or two. The father went fishing, as usual; Jean and his mother were busy with the arrangements of the new apartments; and Pierre, more gloomy than ever, was never seen, except at meals.

“Why in the d—— are you looking so glum?” snarled his father one night. “This is not the first time that I’ve noticed it, either.”

“It is because life has become a burden to me,” replied Pierre.

The old man did not understand, but added, in a disconsolate air:

“Upon my word that is too much. Since we had the luck of that inheritance, everybody seems unhappy; as if we had met with an accident; as if we were mourning for some one.”

"I am, indeed, mourning some one," said Pierre.

"You? Who can it be?" asked Roland, in surprise.

"Oh! somebody you do not know, and whom I loved very much," added Pierre.

"A woman, of course?" demanded the father, imagining it must be a love affair with some light character.

"Yes, a woman."

"Is she dead?" asked the old man, inquisitively.

"No, worse than that, lost."

"Ah!" exclaimed the old man, briefly.

Though astonished at this unexpected confidence, in the presence of his wife and in that odd manner, he did not insist on further explanation, for he considered that such matters did not concern a third person.

Mme. Roland seemed not to have heard; she appeared ill, and was very pale. Many times, of late, her husband had been surprised to see her sink into

her chair and gasp for breath, as if about to faint.

"Really, Louise," he had said to her, "you look quite ill. You are tiring yourself too much fixing up Jean's apartments. Take a little rest. *Sacristi!* The boy is in no hurry, since he is rich."

But she had simply shaken her head without replying.

This day, however, her pallor was so apparent that Roland again remarked it.

"See here, my poor Louise," said he, "this will never do; you must take care of yourself." Then, turning to Pierre, he added, angrily, "Don't you see that your mother is suffering? Have you examined her, at least?"

"No," replied Pierre; "I have not noticed that there was anything the matter with her."

"Why, a blind man could see it," said old Roland, furiously. "What's the use of being a doctor then, if you can't even see that your mother is indisposed? But

just look at her! Upon my word we might all be dying, and this precious doctor would not even suspect it!"

Mme. Roland was now gasping for breath, and had become so pale that her husband cried in alarm: "Why she is going to faint!"

"No — no —" she gasped, "it is nothing — it will pass off — it is nothing."

Pierre had approached, and was looking at her, fixedly.

"Let us see what it is," he said.

But she repeated, in a low voice: "It is nothing — nothing — I assure you — nothing."

Roland, who had gone in search of a bottle of vinegar, now returned and, handing it to his son, cried out, impatiently: "There — why don't you do something for her? Have you felt her pulse, at least?"

As Pierre leaned over to feel her pulse she withdrew her hand so abruptly that she struck it on a chair near her.

“Come,” said he, coldly, “let me do something for you, since you are ill.”

She then extended her hand to him. Her skin was burning, and her pulse quick and irregular.

“It is serious, indeed,” he said. “I will make out a prescription; you require something to quiet your nerves.”

As he bent over the paper to write, he heard the sound of suppressed and choking sobs, and, turning suddenly, he saw she was weeping, her face buried in her hands.

“Louise, Louise,” cried old Roland, distractedly, “what is the matter, tell me what it is?”

But she did not reply, and seemed overwhelmed by a deep and terrible sorrow.

Her husband tried to remove her hands from her face, but she resisted, repeating “No, no, no!”

Then, turning to his son, he asked, ex-

excitedly, "why, what can be the matter? I have never seen her like that."

"It is nothing," said Pierre; "only a slight nervous attack."

And it seemed to him that his own heart was relieved to see her tortured thus; that this suffering lightened his own resentment and diminished his mother's debt of opprobrium. He contemplated her as a judge, satisfied with his work.

But suddenly she arose, and rushing through the door, was gone, and had locked herself in her room before either of them could say a word.

"Can you understand what ails her?" asked Roland, anxiously.

"Oh yes," replied the young doctor; "women of her age are subject to such nervous attacks. It is probable that she will have more like them."

In fact, she did have more of such attacks. They occurred nearly every day, and Pierre seemed to provoke them by a word, as if he possessed the secret of

this strange and unknown disease. He watched her features for those short intervals of repose, and then, with the cunning of a torturer, he reawakened, by a single word, the pain that had been calmed for a moment.

And he suffered as cruelly as she did. He suffered terribly at having lost his love and respect for her, and he suffered while he tortured her. When he had irritated the bleeding wound that he had opened in the heart of this wife and mother, when he felt how miserable and despairing she was, he would rush out alone, so torn by remorse, so overcome with pity, so grieved at having caused her to suffer by his filial contempt, that he was tempted to cast himself into the sea and end this torture.

Oh! how he wished he could forgive now! but he could not, being unable to forget. If he could only prevent her sufferings, but he could not, he suffered so incessantly himself. He would go home

at meal time, his heart filled with tender resolutions, but as soon as he saw her, as soon as his eyes met her gaze, formerly so firm and frank, and now so fleeting, timid and despairing, he struck involuntarily, being unable to withhold the perfidious phrases that arose to his lips.

The infamous secret, known to them alone, embittered him against her. It was a venom that flowed in his veins, and that gave him a desire to bite and destroy like an enraged dog.

Nothing now prevented him from harassing her unceasingly, for Jean almost lived in his new apartments, coming home only to dine and sleep.

Jean had often felt the malice and violences of his brother, and attributed them to jealousy. He promised himself he would take his brother to task some day or other and give him a lesson, for the life of the family was becoming intolerable from these continual scenes. But as he was now almost living away from



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home, he suffered less from those brutalities, and his love of tranquillity restrained his anger. Moreover, the fortune he had inherited intoxicated him with its joys, and he was interested in little else than what concerned him directly. He came home, his mind filled with selfish considerations; preoccupied by the cut of a coat, the shape of a hat, or the proper size of visiting cards. He persistently spoke of all the details of his new home; a new shelf had been placed in his bedroom, or a wardrobe in the adjoining hall, and he explained, at length, the electric bells placed throughout the house as burglar alarms.

It had been decided that on the occasion of his taking formal possession of his apartments, they would all go on an excursion to Saint-Jouin, when they would enjoy themselves until after dinner, and then return to take tea with him in the new home. Roland wanted to go by sea, but the distance and the uncer-

tainty of the wind, besides other reasons, were urged against this plan, and finally a carriage was rented and they started off about ten o'clock, that they might arrive for breakfast.

The undulations of the plains and the beautiful trees surrounding the farms gave this Norman country, through which stretched the dusty road, the appearance of an endless park. Inside the carriage, drawn by two big horses, the Roland family, Mme. Rosémilly and Captain Beausire, deafened by the noise of wheels and blinded by clouds of dust, were for once silent.

It was harvest time, and many farmers were already gathering in their crops. In the fields, already attacked by the scythes, the laborers were swinging their long, wing-shaped blades close to the soil. Beside the deep green of the clover and the bright green of the beet, the yellow wheat brightened up the scenery with its golden hue, seeming to have drunk in

the brilliant light of the sun that streamed upon it.

After a drive of two hours through this delightful country, the carriage turned to the left, passing by a dilapidated wind-mill, a melancholy wreck, half-rotten and deserted, the last survivor of the old-fashioned mills. They then entered a pretty court-yard, and stopped before a cozy, cheerful-looking house, the celebrated tavern of the country.

The hostess, familiarly known as *la belle Alphonsine*, soon appeared in the door, smiling, and extended her hand to the two ladies, who were hesitating in front of the very high steps.

Under a tent, pitched on the turf beneath the sheltering shades of the apple trees, guests were already breakfasting — Parisians returning from Étretat — and from the interior of the house came the sound of joyous laughter and the clatter of dishes.

As all the dining-rooms were occupied

they were obliged to take their breakfast in a private room. They had scarcely taken their seats at the table when Roland suddenly saw a lot of prawn nets hanging against the wall.

"Ah!" cried he, "they fish for prawns here!"

"Yes," replied Beausire, "this is the best fishing place on the coast."

"*Bigre!*" exclaimed Roland, "suppose we go after breakfast."

"As the tide was quite low at three o'clock, they decided that the entire party should spend the afternoon searching for prawns among the rocks.

They, therefore, ate sparingly, to avoid a rush of blood to the head while walking about in the water. Besides, they wished to reserve their appetite for the sumptuous dinner ordered for six o'clock.

Roland could scarcely contain his impatience. He wanted to buy a lot of tackle designed especially for this kind of fishing, and which resembles the nets used to

catch butterflies on the prairie. They were called *lanets*, and were simply small net bags attached to a wooden hoop at the end of a long stick.

Alphonsine helped the ladies to improvise a toilet for the occasion, dressing them in short petticoats, coarse woolen stockings and strong shoes. The men removed their boots and replaced them by wooden shoes purchased from the shoemaker of the place; and, being provided with nets by the smiling Alphonsine, they were soon ready for the sport.

Mme. Rosémilly, with her *lanet* over her shoulder and a basket on her back, looked quite coquettish and pretty in this improvised peasant costume. Her skirt, coquettishly turned up to allow her to run and jump freely among the rocks, displayed the pretty and well turned ankle of a supple young woman. On her dainty head she wore an immense garden hat of yellow straw, turned up on one side, and held in place by a branch

of tamarisk, which gave her a bold and dashing appearance.

Since he had come into possession of the inheritance, Jean daily asked himself whether he should marry her or not. Each time he saw her he felt a decided desire of making her his wife, but as soon as he was again alone, his ardor abated somewhat, and he reflected that it might be wiser to wait. He was now richer than the young widow, for she possessed an income of barely twelve thousand francs; but then, again, her capital was well invested in farms, and lots in Havre, which might later become very valuable. Therefore, their fortunes were almost equivalent, and, besides, she was certainly to his taste.

Looking at her now, as she walked on ahead of him, he thought: "I must come to some decision. After all, I don't think I could do better."

They were following a sloping valley that descended from the village toward

the steep cliffs, which arose twenty-four meters above the sea. In this frame of green hills, sloping from the right and left, a large triangle of silvery blue water glistened in the sunlight, on which could be seen a sail, looking like a small insect, in the distance. The blue sea and bright sky were so closely intermingled, that it was impossible to distinguish where the one ended and the other commenced; and the figures of the two women, who preceded the three men, were clearly defined against the horizon.

Jean's eyes lighted up as he watched the shapely ankles, slender waist, and provoking hat of Mme. Rosémilly; his desire increasing with every step, and pushing him on to one of those decisive resolutions that come suddenly to hesitating and timid persons. The warm air, in which mingled the odor of the hills, of the clover, and of the leaves, and the saline smell of the uncovered rocks, combined to elate and animate him; and at each

step, at every second, at every glimpse of the graceful form before him, his desire increased. And he decided to hesitate no longer, but to tell her at once that he loved her, and wanted her for his wife. The fishing would facilitate their *tête-à-tête*; moreover, the surroundings would make a pretty frame to their love making; with their feet in the limpid water, and watching the long-bearded shrimps, as they escaped under the seaweeds.

When they reached the edge of the precipice, they perceived a narrow path descending along the face of the cliff; and beneath them, about midway between the sea and the foot of the precipice, could be seen a wonderful chaos of enormous rocks, crushed and piled against each other on a grassy and varied plain, that extended to the south as far as the eye could reach. On that long strip of brushwood and broken turf, as if thrown up from a volcano, the fallen

rocks resembled the ruins of a great city that had formerly overlooked the ocean, and which in turn had been dominated by the endless white walls of the cliff.

“How beautiful!” exclaimed Mme. Rosémilly.

Jean had joined her, and with a beating heart he offered his hand to assist her in descending the narrow stairway cut into the rock.

They went down ahead, while Beausire, straightening himself on his short legs, offered his arm to Mme. Roland, who was dizzy by the void below.

Roland and Pierre came last; the old man was so overcome by dizziness and fright, that he had to sit down on the rock and be dragged down from step to step by the young doctor.

The young couple who had gone on quite fast, suddenly came upon a wooden bench, marking a place of rest near the middle of the declivity, and beside it a spring of clear water bubbled up from a

hole in the rock. It first flowed into a basin as large as a tub, which it had worn away into the rock, then, falling in cascades scarcely two feet high, it crossed the path, over which had grown a carpet of water-cresses, and disappeared among the brambles and rocks strewn over this upheaved plain.

“How thirsty I am !” cried Mme. Rosémilly.

But how was she to drink. She tried to gather a few drops in her hand, but it escaped through her fingers. Then an idea struck Jean ; he placed a stone in the pathway and she knelt on it, bringing her lips on a level with the spring.

As she raised her head, covered with sparkling drops, scattered in thousands over her face, her eyebrows and her hair, Jean leaned over her and murmured, “How pretty you look.”

“You must not say such things,” she replied, as if reproving a child.

These were the first words of gallantry

Jean had ever uttered to her, and he now felt embarrassed.

“Come,” he said, confusedly, “let us run away before the others catch up to us.”

In fact, Beausire's back was just becoming visible through the rocks, as he descended backward, assisting Mme. Roland with both hands. A little higher, Roland was still sliding down from step to step, propelling himself by his heels and elbows, and waddling like a turtle; while Pierre, who preceded him, watched over his movements.

The path now became less steep, winding among the enormous blocks of rocks fallen from the mountain; Mme. Rosémilly and Jean ran down the rest of the path and soon reached the pebbled shore, which they traversed to reach the rocks. These were scattered over a long flat surface covered with sea-weeds, through which glittered innumerable pools of water. The low sea could be seen over

there, far away behind that plain, dotted by patches of dark sea-weeds.

Jean rolled his pantaloons to the knees and his sleeves to the elbows; and crying out, "Forward!" jumped bravely into the first pool he met.

Though fully intending to enter the water, the young woman was more prudent, walking around the narrow basin with cautious footsteps, for the clammy weeds were very slippery.

"Do you see anything?" she asked.

"Yes, I see your face reflected in the water," he replied.

"If that is all you see, you will not have much luck in fishing," she retorted.

"It is what I should prefer to capture above all things," he murmured, tenderly.

"Try it, and see how it will go through your net," she laughed.

"Ah! if you only would let me try," he sighed.

"I want to see you catch prawns just

now — and nothing more — for the present,” she replied.

“You are cruel,” he said. “Let us go further, there is nothing here.”

And he offered his hand to assist her in walking over the slippery rocks. She leaned on him, timidly, and he suddenly felt himself overwhelmed by love, filled with the desire of possessing her, as if the disease that had been germinating within him had awaited that very day to burst forth.

They soon reached a deeper crevice, where long, narrow, oddly-colored weeds seemed to swim under the shivering water that flowed to the distant sea through an invisible fissure.

“There, there!” suddenly exclaimed Mme. Rosémilly, “I see one, a big one — a very big one — over there.”

He also saw it, and jumped resolutely into the hole, although the water reached up to his waist.

But the fish, shaking his long mous-

taches, retired slowly in front of the net. Jean, feeling sure of his prize, pushed it toward the patch of sea-weeds, but, feeling himself blocked, the fish glided swiftly over the net, dashed across the pool and disappeared.

The young woman, who had been watching the chase intently, could not restrain a cry of disappointment.

“Oh! how awkward,” she exclaimed.

He was vexed, and, by a thoughtless movement, allowed his net to drag along the bottom among the sea-weeds, and, as he raised it again to the surface, he saw three large, transparent prawns within it, which he had blindly gathered from their invisible hiding place.

He presented them triumphantly to Mme. Rosémilly, who did not dare take them at first, through fear of the sharp, jagged points with which their small heads are armed.

However, she finally overcame her fear and taking them cautiously between two

fingers by the sharp points of their moustaches, placed them into her basket with a little sea-weed to preserve them alive. Then, having found a shallow pool, she entered it with hesitating steps and, although chilled by the cold water, she cast her own net. She was skillful and wary, having a quick hand and the tact of an experienced fisherman. Almost at every venture she brought up fishes that she deceived and surprised by the ingeniousness of her pursuit.

Jean, meanwhile, was finding nothing, but followed her step by step, leaning over her, simulating great despair at his awkwardness and pleading to be taught.

“Oh! do teach me!” he repeated, pleadingly.

Then, as the two faces were reflected side by side in the clear water, rendered as transparent as a limpid mirror by the dark weeds at the bottom, Jean smiled at the face beside his own, that looked at him from below, and threw kisses from

the tips of his fingers that seemed to fall upon the pouting lips.

"How bothersome you are," said the young woman, "you should never try to do two things at once."

"I am doing but one thing just now," he replied, "I love you."

"What has come over you since the last ten minutes," said the young woman, seriously, as she looked up; "have you lost your senses?"

"No; I have not lost my senses," he replied, gravely. "I love you, and at last dare to tell you."

They were standing in the salt seawater up to their knees, with their nets in their hands and looking, searchingly, in each other's eyes.

"How indiscreet of you," she said, banteringly, "to speak of that at this moment; could you not have waited another day, and not spoil my fishing?"

"Forgive me," he murmured, "I have loved you so long I could keep silent no



longer. And to-day you have completely turned my head."

Then, suddenly, she seemed to have come to a decision — to forego pleasure and resign herself to speak of business matters.

"Let us go and sit on that rock," she said, "and we can talk, undisturbed."

They climbed the high rock and seated themselves side by side in the glare of the sun, with their feet dangling over the water.

"My dear friend," she then began, "you are no longer a child, and I am no longer a young girl. We both understand full well what we are about to discuss, and we can weigh all the consequences of our words and actions. If you declare your love for me to-day, I naturally suppose you wish to make me your wife."

He had little expected this plain and matter-of-fact statement of the situation,

and could only reply, stupidly, "Why, of course."

"Have you spoken of this to your father and mother?" she went on.

"No, I have not; I wished to be sure of your acceptance first," he replied.

She extended her still wet hand and he caught it impulsively in his own.

"I am quite willing," she said. "I believe you to be good and loyal. But bear in mind that I will do nothing to displease your parents."

"Oh! do you think that my mother has not foreseen all this, and that she would love you as she does if she did not desire a marriage between us?"

"Nevertheless, I feel somewhat agitated," she said.

They were then silent. He was, on the contrary, astonished that she showed so little agitation, and remained so matter-of-fact. He had expected a coquettish refusal that would mean "yes;" a love comedy that would mix itself with their

fishing in the splashing waters. And it was all over! He felt himself bound, married, in fact, in twenty words. Now there was nothing more to say, since they understood each other, and they were silent, both a little embarrassed by what had passed between them so quickly. A little confused, in fact, not daring to speak, not caring to fish, and not knowing what to do.

But old Roland came to their rescue.

"Come quick!" he cried; "Come, children, and see Beausire, he is emptying the ocean."

The Captain was, indeed, having wonderful luck. He was wet to the waist, and went from puddle to puddle of water, recognizing the best place at a glance, and hunting every cavity hidden under the sea-weeds, by a slow and sure movement of his net. He would then take the beautiful, transparent prawns into his hand, and, by a quick gesture, throw them, still wriggling, into the basket.

Madame Rosémilly was enchanted, and remained at his side, imitating him to the best of her ability—almost forgetting her promise to Jean, who followed her dreamily, in her childish delight of gathering up these shrimps from under the floating weeds.

“Here comes my wife to join the sport,” said old Roland.

Madame Roland and Pierre had remained alone on the beach, for neither of them felt any desire to run about, jumping from rock to rock, and splashing in the water, and yet they hesitated to remain there alone. She feared him, and her son feared her and himself—he feared the uncontrollable cruelty within him.

As they sat, side by side, under the rays of the sun, tempered by the sea-breeze, gazing before them on the vast horizon of silvery-blue water, the same thought came to their mind, “How delightful this would have been in other days.”

She dared not speak to Pierre, knowing that he would reply harshly; and he dared not address his mother, also feeling that, in spite of himself, his words would be severe.

He was turning and beating the round pebbles with the end of his cane. She had picked up a few pebbles and was dropping them through her fingers from one hand to the other with a slow and mechanical gesture, while her gaze was fixed vaguely on the sea. Then, suddenly, her wandering eyes fell upon her son Jean and Mme. Rosémilly, fishing side by side amongst the sea weeds. She then followed and watched their movements, understanding, in a confused way, through her motherly instinct, that they were not conversing as on other days. She saw them bending over their reflected images in the water; she watched them as they stood face to face, interrogating each other's hearts, and as they

climbed the rocks, where they exchanged their vows.

Their outlines stood out clear and bold in the midst of this vast horizon of sky, sea and rocks.

Pierre was also watching them, and suddenly a sarcastic laugh came from his lips.

"What is the matter?" asked his mother, without turning.

"I am taking a lesson," he laughed, scornfully; "I am learning how to prepare one's self to become a cuckold."

She started, angrily, shocked by the word, and exasperated by the insinuation she thought she understood.

"To whom does that apply?" she asked, severely.

"To Jean, *parbleu!*" he replied. "It is very comical to see them going on like that."

"Oh! Pierre, how cruel you are," she murmured in a low voice, trembling with emotion. "That woman is uprightness

itself. Your brother could never find a better wife."

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed, contemptuously. "Uprightness itself! All wives are models of uprightnes — and all the husbands are cockolds. Ha! ha! ha!"

She arose, without a word, and started quickly down the sloping beach, at the risk of slipping and falling into the fissures hidden under the grass, and of breaking her limbs; running on blindly, over stones, through pools of water, straight before her, toward her other son.

"Well, mother!" exclaimed Jean, as he saw her, "have you decided to try your luck, fishing?"

She seized his arm, as if to cry: "Save me; defend me;" but could not utter a word.

"How pale you are!" he said, in surprise, as he saw her troubled looks; "what is the matter?"

“ I almost slipped; I was frightened on the rocks,” she stammered.

Then Jean, guiding her from rock to rock, tried to interest her in fishing by explaining how the prawns were caught. But, as she did not appear to listen, and, as he felt the violent need of confiding in some one, he led her away from the others, and said, in a low voice:

“ Guess what I have done? ”

“ But — but — I do not know,” she replied.

“ Guess,” he insisted.

“ I — I cannot,” she answered, absently.

“ Well, then, I suppose I must tell you,” he said, laughing. “ I have just told Mme. Rosémilly that I desired to marry her.”

Her head was swimming, and her mind was in such distress that she scarcely understood his words, but repeated vaguely after him:

“ To marry her? ”

“Yes; have I done well? Don’t you think her charming?” he asked.

“Yes — charming — you have done well,” she repeated.

“Then you approve my choice?” he said, eagerly.

“Yes — I approve,” she replied, absently.

“How strangely you say that,” he said, anxiously. “One would think that — that — you were not pleased.”

“But, yes — I am — pleased,” she said.

“Quite sure?” he asked.

“Quite sure!” she repeated.

And to prove it, she seized him in her arms and covered his face with big, motherly kisses.

Then, when she had dried her tears, she perceived, over there on the beach, a body stretched at full length like a corpse, the face buried in the pebbles. It was her other son — Pierre — struggling with his despair.

Then she drew her “little Jean” still

further on, near the waves, and they spoke of this marriage which had been her dream since she had known the young woman.

The tide now drove them back toward the fishing party, and they soon all started up the cliff again. As they passed Pierre, who was feigning sleep, they aroused him and hurried toward the hotel, for they were half famished. The dinner was very long and plentifully sprinkled with wine.

CHAPTER VII.

ON the way back, all the men, with the exception of Jean, went to sleep in the carriage. Every few minutes Beausire and Roland would fall over against their neighbor, but were promptly shaken off. They would then start up, cease their snoring, open their eyes and mutter, incoherently, "fine night," then immediately fall over on the other side.

By the time they reached Havre, their lethargy was so profound that the others found it difficult to arouse them; and Beausire absolutely refused to go to Jean's apartments, where they were to take tea, insisting on being deposited at his own door.

The young lawyer was to sleep in his new home for the first time that night; and he was suddenly filled with a puerile

joy at the thought that he would introduce his *fiancée*, that very evening, into the apartments she would so soon occupy.

The servant had been dismissed for the evening, as Mme. Roland did not like to trust her alone, for fear fire might destroy all this gorgeousness during their absence; and she had taken upon herself the task of making the tea and serving guests.

No one had yet entered the rooms except herself, Jean and the workmen, as she wished to astonish their friends by the beauty of the interior. She, therefore, insisted that they should wait in the obscurity of the vestibule while Jean lighted the lamps and candles, that they might take in its magnificence at one glance.

When the folding-doors were thrown open, the conservatory, lighted by a chandelier and numerous colored lights hidden amongst the palms and flowers, appeared at first sight like a fairy-land

scene. There was a brief silence of astonishment, then Roland, astounded by so much luxury, exclaimed, "Bravo!" clapping his hands as if before the apotheosis.

They then passed on to the first salon, which was hung and furnished in old gold, and from there into the large consultation parlor, furnished very simply and elegantly in pale salmon pink.

Seating himself in the large arm-chair before his desk, loaded with books, Jean, in a grave, somewhat forced voice, delivered his first opinion.

"Yes, Madame," he began, "the laws are rigid and formal, and give me, with the approbation which I have announced to you, the absolute certainty that within three months the affair of which we spoke will have come to a happy solution."

He was looking at Mme. Rosémilly, who was smiling at Mme. Roland, and as he said the last words his mother took

his *fiancée's* hands in hers and pressed them affectionately.

Jean could no longer repress his delight, but capered around the room like a young collegian, then, stopping suddenly in the center of the room, exclaimed: "Hem! how well the voice carries in this room. It is an excellent place for an oration," and proceeded to make a speech.

"If humanity alone, if that natural sentiment of compassion which we feel for all sufferings was to be the motive of the acquittal that we solicit from you, we would appeal, gentlemen of the jury, to your pity, to your hearts as fathers and men; but we have 'right' on our side, and it is simply a question of justice that we shall submit before you —"

Pierre looked around these apartments that might have been his own, and each word from his brother added to his irritation and resentment, thinking him much too stupid to be the possessor of so much luxury.

Mme. Roland now led the way to the other apartments, and, opening a door at the right, said, "This is the bedroom."

She had brought all her motherly pride and love to her assistance in the adornment of this room. The hangings were of Rouen cretonne, which was an imitation of old Norman tapestry. It was a Louis XV. design — a shepherdess in a medallion held up by the united beaks of two doves — and gave the walls, the bed and chairs an air so coquettish and rustic that it was altogether very charming.

"Oh! how beautiful," exclaimed Mme. Rosémilly, in delight.

"Does it please you?" asked Jean.

"Oh! so much," she said.

"If you only knew how pleased I am to hear you say so," he replied, softly.

They looked at each other for an instant, with a world of confident tenderness in their eyes.

She was, nevertheless, somewhat em-

barrassed and confused in this room, which was to be her nuptial chamber. On entering she had remarked that the bed was very wide, a real family bed, chosen by Mme. Roland, who had, no doubt, foreseen and desired the speedy marriage of her son; and this precaution of the mother pleased her, seeming to say to her that she was expected in the family.

They then re-entered the parlor, and Jean, opening the door to the left, led the way into the *rotonde* dining-room, which was profusely decorated by Chinese lanterns. Mother and son had piled up all that their fancy could suggest into this room. It was filled with — bamboo furniture, grotesque Chinese figures, silken banners spangled with gold, hung on transparent rods on which glass beads sparkled like drops of water, fans nailed to the walls to hold the draperies in place, sabers, masks, cranes made with feathers; and all those bric-a-brac of

porcelain, wood, paper, ivory and bronze, had that pretentious and stiff aspect, that unaccustomed hands and untrained eyes gave to things that exact the greatest tact, taste and artistic education. It was, however, the room that was most admired in the new home. Pierre, alone, took exception to the decorations, and made his remarks with an irony and bitterness that wounded his brother deeply.

The table was loaded with pyramids of fruits, and monuments of cakes. They were not at all hungry, however, and could only suck the fruit and nibble the cake, rather than eat of it. Soon after, Mme. Rosémilly pleaded fatigue and prepared to go.

It was decided that old Roland should escort her home, while Mme. Roland, in the absence of the servant, would look around to see that nothing was wanting to the comfort of her son.

“Shall I return for you?” asked her husband.

She hesitated, then answered: "Never mind; Pierre will take me home."

As soon as they were gone she blew out the candles, put away the cake, sugar and wines into the sideboard, and returned the key to Jean; then she went into the bedroom to open the bed, see that the jug was filled with fresh water and the window properly closed.

Pierre and Jean had remained in the small parlor, the latter still smarting under the severe criticism made on his taste, and the former more and more enraged to see his brother in possession of these apartments.

They had been smoking some time in silence, when Pierre suddenly arose, exclaiming:

"*Cristi!* how faded the widow looked to-night; excursions are not favorable to her looks."

Jean felt one of those sudden furies that overwhelms easy-going persons when wounded to the heart; his emotion was

so intense that he gasped for breath as he stammered:

"I forbid you to call Mme. Rosémilly 'the widow' when you refer to her in future."

"Upon my word, I believe you are giving me orders," said Pierre, turning haughtily to him. "Perhaps you are losing your senses."

"I am not losing my senses," said Jean, straightening up, "but I have had enough of your conduct toward me."

"Toward you?" laughed Pierre, scornfully. "Do you make part of Mme. Rosémilly?"

"I want you to know that Mme. Rosémilly is to become my wife," declared Jean, warmly.

"Ha! ha! very good, indeed," said Pierre, laughing outright. "I now understand why I should no longer call her 'the widow.' But you have taken a strange way to announce your marriage."

“I forbid you to ridicule her — do you hear me? — I forbid you,” said Jean, in a trembling voice.

He had approached his brother, pale, trembling and exasperated by his irony aimed at the woman he loved and had chosen.

But Pierre also became suddenly furious. All the powerless hatred, the furious jealousy, the repressed anger and the silent despair that had been gathering for some time within his heart, now burst forth and blinded him like a rush of blood to the head.

“You dare? — You dare?” — he hissed. “And I order you to be silent, do you hear? — I order you.”

Jean, surprised at this violence, was silent for a few seconds, searching in his troubled mind for the thing, the phrase, the word, that would cut his brother to the heart.

“I have long known that you are jealous of me,” he rejoined slowly, trying

to control his fury that his aim might be surer, and his words wound more deeply, "ever since the day you began to say 'the widow,' because you understood that it annoyed me."

Pierre burst into one of those scornful and malicious laughs that were peculiar to him.

"Ha! ha! *Mon Dieu!* Jealous of you!—Me, jealous,—and of what?—of what, *Mon Dieu!*—of your face or your intelligence?—"

But Jean felt that he had touched the wound in his heart.

"Yes," he went on, "you are jealous of me; and you have been jealous ever since we were children; and you became furious when you saw that this woman preferred me, and would not accept your attentions."

"I — I —" stuttered Pierre, exasperated by this insinuation, "I am jealous of you? And on account of that little goose, that simpleton, that stupidity? —"

Jean who knew that his words struck home, went on.

“And the day when you tried to row against me in the *Perle*! And all you have said before her to impress her with your superiority! Why, you are bursting with jealousy! And when that inheritance came, you became furious, and have detested me ever since; you have shown it in your manners; you have made everybody suffer, and you are not an hour without spitting the bile that chokes you!”

Pierre clinched his fists in fury and felt an almost irresistible impulse of throttling his brother.

“Ah!” he muttered, “stop, don’t speak of that fortune.”

“Why, jealousy is oozing from every pore of your skin!” cried Jean. “You cannot say one word to my mother, father or myself but it bursts forth. You affect to scorn me because you are jealous! You quarrel with everybody because of

your jealousy. And now that I am rich you cannot contain yourself, you have become venomous; you torture our mother as if it were her fault" —

Pierre had recoiled to the chimney-piece, his lips apart, his eyes dilated, the prey of one of those wild furies that lead to crime.

"Be silent, be silent!" he panted in a low voice.

"I will not be silent! I have long wanted to tell you what I thought of you; you have now given me the occasion, so much the worse for you. I love a woman. You know it, and you ridicule her in my presence. You have driven me to it, so much the worse for you. But I will tear out your viper's fangs! I will force you to respect me."

"To respect you?"

"Yes, me!"

"To respect — you — who have disgraced us all by your cupidity!"

“What did you say?” cried Jean in a frenzy. “Repeat that — repeat it!”

“I say that one should not accept the fortune of one man while passing for the son of another.”

Jean remained motionless, scarcely understanding, horrified by the insinuation conveyed in his brother's words.

“What! you say — repeat that again!”

“I merely repeat what the world thinks, what everybody is speaking of; that you are the son of the man who left you his fortune. Well, a decent son does not accept the money that dishonors his mother.”

“Pierre — Pierre — Pierre — do you realize what you say? You — and it is you — who utters this infamy?”

“Yes — it is I. Do you not see that I am dying of shame and sorrow for the last month, that I spend my nights without slumber, and my days in hiding like a wild beast, that I know not what I am saying or doing, nor what will become of

me, so much do I suffer, so crazed am I with shame and grief, for my suspicion has now become a certainty!"

"Hush, Pierre! Mamma is in the next room! Remember that she may hear us — that she does hear us."

But he could no longer control himself, and felt that he must unburden his heart; and he told all, his suspicions, his arguments, his struggles, his conviction, and the history of the portrait that had disappeared once more.

He spoke in short, broken and disjointed phrases; like the ravings of a madman.

He seemed to have forgotten that Jean, and perhaps his mother, were listening. He spoke as if no one heard him, because he must speak, because he must give vent to his suffering; the wound in his heart had been too long compressed and closed. It had now swelled like a tumor, and this tumor had burst, bespattering everybody. He began to

walk up and down, as he nearly always did, and with his eyes fixed before him, gesticulating in a frenzy of despair, choked by sobs and spasms of anger against himself; he spoke as if he were confessing his misery and the misery of his family, as if he would have cast his sufferings to the deaf and invisible air that carried away his words.

Jean distracted and almost suddenly convinced by the blind energy of his brother, was leaning against the door, behind which he feared their mother had heard them.

She could not leave the room without passing through the parlor. She had not returned, because she had not dared.

"There, what a brute I am to have talked like this!" cried Pierre, with a sudden stamp of his foot. And he rushed, bare-headed, down the stairs.

The noise of the street door, as it closed with a bang, awakened Jean from the profound stupor into which he had

sunk. A few seconds passed, seconds that were longer than hours; and still his soul remained benumbed in an idiotic coma. He realized that he must think and act without delay; but he hesitated, not wishing to understand, to know, to remember; through fear, weakness and cowardice. He belonged to that race of temporizers who always put off everything till the morrow; and, now that he must take an immediate resolution, he instinctively sought to gain a few moments of delay.

But the deep silence that surrounded him after the loud vociferations of Pierre, the sudden silence of the walls and furniture, with the bright lights of the six candles and two lamps struck him with such terror that he was seized with a desire of running away also.

He then tried to concentrate his thoughts, to shake off his torpor and reflect.

He had never encountered a difficulty

in his life. He was one of those men who allow themselves to drift along like the water that flows. He had been a careful scholar to avoid punishment, and had completed his legal studies with regularity because his existence was so unruffled and calm. All things in the world seemed only natural to him, and never attracted his attention or awakened his curiosity. He loved order and tranquillity through temperament, having no depth of mind or soul; and he remained, before this catastrophe, like a man who falls into the water and does not know how to swim.

He at first tried to doubt. His brother had lied through hatred and jealousy.

And yet, how could he have been despicable enough to say such a thing of his mother if he were not himself torn by despair? And then, there still vibrated in his ears, before his eyes, through his nerves, even in his flesh, certain words, certain cries of sufferings, some intonations and gestures of Pierre's, so painful as to be irre-

sistible and as irrefutable as certitude itself.

He was too crushed to make a movement or come to a decision. His anguish was intolerable; and he felt that his mother had heard all and was waiting for him behind that closed door.

What was she doing? Not a movement, not a sound, not a breath, not a sigh, revealed the presence of a human being behind those boards. Had she escaped? But how? If she had escaped—she must have jumped from the window into the street below!

This sudden thought made him start with terror; he burst rather than opened the door, and rushed into the room.

It seemed deserted. A single candle burned on the dressing-case.

He ran to the window; it was closed and the curtains drawn down. He turned, and searched the dark corners with anxious eyes; then, seeing that the curtains were drawn open from the bed, he pre-

cipitated himself toward it. His mother was there, lying at full length on the bed, her face buried among the pillows, which she clutched with both hands and held over her ears, that she might hear no more.

He at first thought she must be smothered. Then, seizing her by the shoulders, he turned her over, but she still held the pillow against her face, to choke her cries.

But the contact of the rigid body, and of the contracted arms communicated to him the shock of her indescribable torture. The energy and strength with which she held the feather-pillow over mouth, eyes, and ears, that he might neither see nor speak to her, made him understand by the shock he received, to what degree one may suffer. And his heart, that simple heart, was torn with pity. He was not a judge,—not even a merciful judge;—he was a man full of weaknesses, and a son full of affection. He remem-

bered nothing that his brother had said, he neither reasoned nor argued, he simply touched the inert body of his mother and finding himself unable to tear the pillow from her face, he cried as he kissed her dress :

“Mamma, mamma, my poor mamma, look at me!”

He might have thought her dead had it not been for a shiver that ran through her almost insensible body, like the vibrations of a stretched cord.

“Mamma, mamma,” he repeated, listen to me. It is not true, I know it is not true.”

She had a violent spasm, followed by smothered sobs in the pillow. Then all her nerves relaxed, the rigid muscles slackened, the fingers loosened their hold on the pillow and he raised it from her face.

She was deathly pale and the tears flowed between her closed eyelids. Throwing his arms around her neck he

kissed her eyes slowly, with long kisses of sympathy wetted by his tears and repeated:

“Mamma, my dear mamma, I know it is not true. Do not weep, I know it! It is not true.”

She arose and looked at him; and with one of those courageous efforts that are required in certain cases to kill one's self, she said to him:

“No, it is true, my child.”

And they remained face to face without speaking. For a few instants her sobs again suffocated her, then by an effort she conquered her emotion, and went on.

“It is true, my child. Why should I try to deceive you? It is true. You would not believe me, if I did lie.”

She looked wild and distracted. Seized with terror, he threw himself on his knees by the bedside, murmuring,

“Hush, mamma, hush.”

She had risen, and with frightful energy and resolution, cried out:

“But — I have nothing more to say to you — my child; farewell!”

And she walked toward the door, but he seized her in his arms, crying:

“What are you doing, mamma? Where are you going?”

“I do not know—how should I know”—she gasped, “I have nothing more to do since I am alone in the world.”

She struggled to escape, but he retained her in his powerful clasp, finding only that one word which he repeated over and over.

“Mamma — mamma — mamma.”

“No, no,” said she, trying to break away from him. “I am your mother no longer. I am nothing to you nor to any one else, nothing, nothing! You have no longer a father and mother, my poor child — Farewell!”

He suddenly understood that if he let her go, she would never return, and raising her in his arms he carried her to an easy-chair, and forced her into it, then

kneeling before her and forming a chain around her with his arms, he went on:

“You will not go from here, mamma. I love you and I shall keep you. I shall keep you always: you are mine.”

“No, no, my poor boy,” she murmured in an almost inaudible voice, “it is impossible. You weep with me now; to-morrow you would cast me away. You could not forgive me, either.”

“What me? How little you know me,” he replied with such an impulse of sincere love that she gave a cry of joy, took his head by the hair with both hands, pulled him violently to her and kissed him distractedly.

She placed her cheek against his own, feeling the warmth of his skin through his thick beard and remained motionless, whispering into his ear:

“No, no, my little Jean. You would not forgive me, to-morrow. You think so, but you are deceiving yourself. You forgave me to-night; and that pardon has

saved my life; but you must never see me again."

"Mamma, do not say that!" he repeated, clasping her in his arms once more.

"Yes, my little one, I must go. I know not where nor when, neither do I know what I shall say, but I must go. I would not dare look at you or embrace you any more, don't you understand?"

"My darling little mother," he whispered into her ear in his turn, "you will remain because I wish it, because I have need of you. And you must swear to obey me at once."

"No, my child, it cannot be."

"Oh! mamma, it must be, do you hear? It must be."

"No, my child, it is impossible. It would be condemning us all to the tortures of hell. I have known for the past month what this anguish is. You are moved now, but when that has passed, when you look upon me as Pierre does,

when you remember what I have said!— Oh!—my little Jean, think—think, that I am your mother!”—

“You must not leave me, mamma, I have but you.”

“But consider my son that we can never look at each other without blushing, that whenever our eyes meet, mine will shrink from your gaze, and I shall feel ready to die of shame.”

“That is not true, mamma.”

“Yes, yes, yes, it is true! Oh! I well understood all your poor brother’s struggles, all, even from the first day. And now, when I hear his footstep in the house, my heart beats as if it would burst my breast; when I hear his voice I feel ready to faint. I still had you! Now, I have you no longer. Oh! my little Jean, do you believe that I could live between you two.”

“Yes, mamma, I will love you so much that you will think of it no longer.”

“Oh! oh! as if that were possible.”

“Yes, it is possible.”

“How can I avoid thinking of it, when I see your brother and yourself every day. Will you both forget it?”

“I swear it!”

“But you will think of it every hour of the day.”

“No, I swear it. And further; if you leave me I will enlist and get killed.”

This puerile threat upset her completely; she strained Jean to her heart and caressed him with passionate tenderness, while he continued: “I love you more than you think, a great deal more, a great deal more; come, be reasonable. Try to remain for one week only. Will you promise me a week! You cannot refuse me that?”

“My child” — said she, placing her two hands on his shoulders and holding him at arm’s length. “Let us try to be calm and control our emotions. Let me speak first. If I were to hear, once only, from your lips, what I have heard every

day for a month from the lips of your brother; if I were to see, once only, in your eyes, what I have so often read in his; if I were to guess by a single word, or a single look, that I had become as odious to you as I have to him—one hour after, you understand, one hour after—I shall be gone forever.”

“Mamma, I swear it”—he interposed.

“Let me speak—For a month I have suffered all that a woman can suffer. From the moment I understood that your brother, that my other son, suspected me and was guessing the truth, minute by minute, every instant of my life became a martyrdom that it is impossible to express.”

Her voice was so full of anguish, that the contagion of her torture, filled Jean's eyes with tears. He attempted to embrace her, but she repulsed him, saying:

“Leave me alone—listen—I have still many things to tell you, that you may understand—but you do not under-

stand—it is that—if I should remain—it would be necessary—No, I cannot!”—

“Speak, mamma, speak!”

“Well, yes. At least I will not have deceived you. You wish me to remain with you, do you not? Well, to do that, that we may still see, meet and speak to each other every day in the house—for I no longer dare open a door through fear of finding your brother behind it—it is necessary, not that you pardon me—nothing hurts more than a pardon—but that you should bear me no ill-will for what I have done. You must feel strong enough, different enough from all the world, to say to yourself that you are not Roland’s son, without blushing and without scorning me. I have already suffered enough. I have already suffered too much; I can bear no more; no, I can bear no more! And my suffering does not date from yesterday, but from long ago. But you can never understand it! That we may still be able to live together and embrace each

other, my little Jean, you must say to yourself, that if I was your father's mistress, I was still more his wife, his true wife; that I have no shame in my heart; that I regret nothing; that I still love him, though he is dead; that I shall always love him; that I have loved but him; that he was all my life, all my joy, all my hope, all my consolation, all! all! all to me! for many years! Listen, my little one, before God who hears me, I would have had no pleasure in existence if I had not met him—nothing, no love, no affection, not one of those hours that make us regret that we grow old, nothing! I owe him everything! I have loved no one in the world but him, your brother and yourself. Without you it would be a void, dark and empty as the night. I should never have loved anything, known anything, desired anything. I should not even have wept, for I have wept, my little Jean. Oh! yes, I have wept since we came here. I had given

myself entirely to him, body and soul, forever, with happiness, and for more than ten years I was his wife, as he was my husband before God, who made us for each other. And then, I understood that he loved me less. He was still kind and attentive, but I was no longer what I had been to him. It was all over! Oh! how I wept!—How miserable and deceitful is life!—Nothing is lasting.—And then we came here; and I never saw him again, he never came.—He promised in all his letters!—I always expected him!—but I never saw him again!—and now he is dead!—He still loved us, however, since he thought of you. I shall love him until my dying hour, and I shall never deny him; I love you, because you are his child, and I could not be ashamed of him before you! Do you understand? I could not! If you wish me to remain, you must accept being his son, and we must speak of him sometimes. You must love him a little, and we must think of him when we look

at each other. If you will not, if you cannot, then farewell, my little one; it is impossible that we should remain together now! I will do as you decide."

"Remain, mamma," replied Jean, softly.

She strained him to her heart, and wept again; then, laying her cheek against his, she resumed:

"Yes, but Pierre? What shall become of us, with him?"

"We shall find some way," murmured Jean. "You can no longer live near him."

At the thought of her elder son, her anguish returned.

"No, no, I cannot. No! no!" she exclaimed. And, throwing herself in Jean's arms, she cried out, in the distress of her soul:

"Save me from him, my little one; save me. Do something—I know not what. Search—save me!"

"Yes, mamma, I shall search."

“At once—you must—at once. Do not leave me! I am so afraid of him—so afraid!”

“Yes, I will find some means, I promise.”

“Oh! but quick, quick! You do not understand what passes within me when I see him.”

Then she whispered in his ear: “Keep me here, with you.”

He hesitated, reflected, and understood, with his positive good sense, the danger of this arrangement. But it required long reasoning and many precise arguments to overcome her fright and terror.

“Only for to-night,” she pleaded, “only for to-night. You could send word to Roland to-morrow morning, and say I was taken suddenly ill.”

“That is impossible, since Pierre is gone. Come, have more courage. I will arrange everything to-morrow, I promise. I shall be at the house at nine o’clock. Come, put on your hat. I will take you home.”

"I will do as you wish," she said, with the timid and grateful confidence of a child.

She tried to arise; but the paroxysm had been too severe, she could not support herself.

He made her drink a glass of water, and bathed her temples in vinegar. She was as weak and pale as if just arisen from a sick bed.

At length she was able to walk, and took Jean's arm. Three o'clock was striking as they passed out into the night.

When they reached her door, he kissed her affectionately, saying: "Good night, mamma, courage!"

She entered and, with cautious footsteps, ascended the silent stairway; entering her room, she undressed quickly, and with the refound emotions of her former adulteries, she crept into the bed beside the snoring Roland.

Pierre was the only one awake in the house to hear her return.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN he reëntered his apartments, Jean threw himself on a divan; the griefs and anxieties that made his brother run and hide like a hunted animal, had an entirely different effect on his somnolent nature and completely paralyzed him. He felt powerless to make a movement, unable even to reach his bed; helpless in body and mind, crushed and overwhelmed. He was not struck, as Pierre had been, in the purity of his filial love, in that secret dignity which is the envelope of proud hearts, but he was overwhelmed by a stroke of fate that menaced his dearest interests.

When at length his heart was calmed and his thoughts had cleared like troubled waters after a storm, he faced the situation that had just been revealed to him. Had he learned the secret of

his birth in any other manner, he would have been filled with indignation and profound grief; but after his quarrel with his brother, after that violent and brutal accusation had shattered his nerves, the poignant emotion caused by his mother's confession left him without the energy to revolt. The shock his sensibilities had received had been strong enough to sweep away, in a moment of irresistible emotion, all the prejudices and all the sacred susceptibilities of his moral nature. Moreover, he was not a man capable of resistance. He did not like to struggle against others, and still less against himself; he therefore resigned himself, and by an instinctive inclination, an innate love of quiet, of peace and tranquillity, he now began to be disturbed at the prospect of the annoyances that would surge around him and overwhelm him at once. He saw they were inevitable, and to overcome them he resolved on superhuman efforts of energy

and activity. This difficulty must be met at once, to-morrow, for he felt that imperious need of an immediate solution, which constitutes all the force of the weak, who are incapable of a protracted determination. His lawyer's mind, habituated in disentangling and studying complicated situations and questions of domestic order in troubled households, immediately discovered all the near consequences of the present state of his brother's mind. In spite of himself, he faced the results from an almost professional point of view, as if he were arranging the future relations of clients after a moral catastrophe. A continual contact with Pierre was certainly impossible now. He could easily avoid it by remaining at home, but it was out of the question for their mother to remain under the same roof with her eldest son.

He remained motionless on the cushions for a long time, meditating, imagin-

ing and reflecting combinations, without finding anything satisfactory.

But an idea suddenly assailed him:— Would an honest man retain the fortune he had received?

His first impulse was to give it to the poor. It would be hard, certainly, but it could not be helped. He would sell his furniture and work like others, as all beginners have to work. This virile and painful resolution roused his courage. He arose and leaned his forehead against the window. He had been poor; he would return to poverty. After all, he would not die of it. His eyes were fixed on the gas-jet that burned on the opposite side of the street. Then, as a belated woman hurried past, he suddenly remembered Madame Rosémilly, and his heart was thrilled by a shock of profound emotion born of a cruel thought. All the desperate consequences of his resolution appeared to him at once. He must renounce this woman, renounce happiness,

renounce everything. Could he act thus now that he was engaged to her? She had accepted him, knowing him to be rich. She would still accept him if he were poor; but had he the right to demand, to impose this sacrifice upon her? Would it not be better to keep this money as a trust, which he could restore to the poor at some future time?

And in his soul, where egotism assumed the mask of honesty, all these disguised interests struggled and contended with each other. His first scruples yielded to ingenious reasonings, then reappeared, then again vanished.

He returned to his seat, searching a decisive motive, an all-powerful pretext, to settle his hesitations and convince his natural uprightness. He had already said to himself a score of times: "Since I am the son of this man, since I know it and accept it, is it not natural that I should also accept his fortune?" But

this argument could not silence the "No" murmured in his conscience.

Suddenly he thought: "Since I am not the son of the man whom I believed my father, I can accept nothing from him, neither during his lifetime nor after his death. It would be neither right nor just. It would be robbing my brother."

This new manner of looking at it, relieved him, appeased his conscience, and he returned to the window.

"Yes," he was saying to himself, "I must renounce all claim to the family inheritance, and leave it entirely to Pierre, since I am not his father's child. That is only just. Then is it not just, also, that I should retain the money received from my own father?"

Having concluded that he could not claim any of Roland's fortune, and decided to give it up entirely, he then consented and resigned himself to keeping Maréchal's inheritance, for if he refused both he would find himself reduced to mendicity.

This delicate point once settled, he returned to the question of Pierre's presence in the family. How could they dispose of him? He was despairing of finding a practical solution when the whistle of a steamer entering the port, seemed to reply to him by suggesting an idea.

Then, without undressing, he threw himself on his bed and dozed until daylight.

About nine o'clock, he went out to assure himself if the execution of his project was possible. Then, after a few attempts and visits, he proceeded to the home of his parents. His mother was awaiting him in her own room.

"If you had not come," she said, "I should never have dared to go down."

Just then Roland called from the foot of the stairs.

"Ain't we going to have anything to eat to-day, confound it!"

Receiving no reply, he roared out:

"Josephine, you hussy! what are you doing?"

"Here I be master," came the voice of the servant, from the depth below stairs, "what d'ye want?"

"Where is your mistress?"

"Madame is up stairs with Mister Jean!"

Then raising his head to the second story, the old man roared: "Louise!"

"What is it?" said Mme. Roland opening her door.

"Aren't we going to have anything to eat, confound it!"

"Yes, my dear, we are going."

And she went down, followed by Jean.

"What, you!" exclaimed Roland on seeing the young man, "are you tired of your own home already?"

"No, father, but I wished to speak with mother this morning."

Jean came forward with extended hand, and as he felt the paternal grasp of the old man, an odd and unexpected emotion thrilled his heart, the emotion of separations and farewells without hope of return.

“Has not Pierre come down?” asked Mme. Roland. “No, but so much the worse for him,” replied old Roland, shrugging his shoulders. “He is always late; let’s begin without him.”

“You had better go and look for him, Jean,” said his mother turning to him, “he will feel hurt if we do not wait for him.”

“The young man went out of the room and ascended the stairs with the feverish resolution of a timid person about to fight. He knocked at the door and Pierre called out:

“Come in!”

“He entered and found his brother busily writing at his desk.

“Good morning!” said Jean,

“Good morning!” said Pierre, rising.

And the brothers shook hands as if nothing had happened.

“Are you not coming down to breakfast?” asked Jean.

“Why — you see — I have a great deal

to do." His voice trembled and his anxious eye interrogated his brother, as to what he should do.

"We are waiting for you," Jean replied.

"Ah! is she — is mother down stairs?"

"Yes, it was she who sent me in search of you."

"Ah! then I shall go down."

At the dining-room door he hesitated to go in first; then by a quick movement he opened the door, and saw his father and mother seated at the table facing each other.

He went up to her without raising his eyes, and, without a word, he bent over her and offered her his forehead to kiss as he had done for some time past, instead of kissing her on the cheeks as of yore. He guessed that she approached her mouth, but did not feel her lips on his skin, and he straightened up with a beating heart, after this pretended caress.

"What passed between them after my departure?" he asked himself.

Jean repeatedly called her "mamma" and "dear mother," in affectionate tones, waiting on her attentively and pouring her wine for her. Pierre then understood that they had wept together, but he could not penetrate their thoughts. "Did Jean believe his mother guilty or his brother a wretch?"

And all the reproaches he had heaped upon himself for the horrible things he had uttered assailed him anew, choking him and closing his lips, preventing him from eating and speaking.

He now felt an intolerable desire to fly, to leave this house that was no longer his, and these people who were attached to him by imperceptible links only. He would have wished to go at once, no matter where, feeling that all was over, that he could no longer remain near them, that he was continually torturing them, in spite of himself, merely by his presence, and that they would make him suffer a continual unbearable anguish.

Jean talked and chatted with Roland. Pierre neither listened nor heard. He thought he detected, however, a meaning in his brother's voice and he now tried to catch the drift of his words. Jean was saying:

"They say, she will be the finest ship afloat, a capacity of six thousand five hundred tons. She will sail on her first trip next month."

"So soon!" cried Roland, astonished, "I never thought she would be ready to go to sea this summer."

"You are mistaken," said Jean, "the work has been pushed on with such vigor that she will certainly cross before autumn. I passed by the company's office this morning and spoke to one of the managers."

"Ah! ah! which one?" inquired the old man.

"M. Marchand, the particular friend of the president of the board of directors."



“ Why, do you know him? ” asked the old man, in surprise.

“ Yes, and I had a small favor to ask him.”

“ Ah! then you can take me through the *Lorraine* as soon as she comes in port, can't you? ”

“ Certainly, I will,” assented Jean.

Jean appeared hesitating, searching phrases, pursuing an undiscoverable transition. Finally, he said:

“ In fact, life on one of those great transatlantic steamers is very agreeable. More than half of each month is spent in two superb cities, New York and Havre, and the remainder among charming people on the sea. One may make agreeable acquaintances among the passengers, and some of them may be useful, yes, very useful, later on. Just fancy; the captain, by economizing on the coal, can make twenty-five thousand francs a year, if not more.”

“ Phew! ” exclaimed Roland, with a

long whistle, that bore witness to his profound respect for both the sum and the captain.

“The purser,” rejoined Jean, “may reach ten thousand, and the surgeon has a fixed salary of five thousand, with lodgings, board, lights, heat, service, etc., etc. Which is equivalent to ten thousand, at least; that is a handsome sum.”

Pierre, who had raised his eyes, encountered those of his brother, and understood him. Then, after a little hesitation, he asked:

“Is it very difficult to obtain the place as surgeon on one of those ships?”

“Yes and no,” Jean replied. “It all depends on circumstances and the influence you possess.”

This was followed by a long silence, then the doctor rejoined:

“And the *Lorraine* sails next month?”

“Yes, the 7th,” replied Jean.

There was a silence during which Pierre reflected. Indeed it would be an

easy solution to the difficulty if he could go as surgeon on this ship. Later on, he might leave it perhaps, but in the meantime he would earn his living without asking anything from his family. He had sold his watch two days previous, for he could not now ask his mother for money. He was therefore without other resources; he had no means of obtaining other bread than that of this uninhabitable house, of sleeping in another bed, or under another roof. After a little hesitation, he said:

“If I could, I would willingly sail with her.”

“Why do you not?” asked Jean.

“Because I know no one belonging to the steamship company,” Pierre replied.

“And what about all your fine projects of success?” cried old Roland in stupefaction, “what will become of them?”

“There are times when one must sacrifice and renounce the brightest hopes.

Besides, it is only a beginning, a means of amassing a few thousand francs to start me in life."

"That is very true," said his father, immediately convinced. "In a couple of years you can save six or seven thousand francs, and that will be a good start. What do you think of it, Louise?"

"I think Pierre is right," she replied, almost inaudibly.

"And I will speak to M. Poulin, whom I know very well!" cried old Roland enthusiastically. "He is judge of the Tribunal of Commerce, and has charge of the company's affairs. I can also see M. Lenient, the ship owner, who is an intimate friend of one of the vice-presidents."

"Do you wish me to sound M. Marchand at once?" asked Jean.

"Yes, I do," replied Pierre; then after a moment's thought he added:

"The best way would probably be, to write to my teachers at the medical school,

who think very highly of me. I know that some of those ship surgeons are not very skillful. Flattering letters from such authorities as Professors Mas-Roussel, Rémusot, Flache and Borriquel would do more in an hour than all these doubtful recommendations. All that is necessary is that your friend, M. Marchand, should present those letters to the board of directors."

"Your idea is excellent!" said Jean approvingly, and he smiled, reassured, almost content and sure of success, incapable of feeling disturbed for any length of time.

"You will write those letters to-day?"

"Yes, I shall do so at once. I will not take any coffee this morning, I am too nervous," he said, as he arose and went out.

"And you, mamma, what will you do?" asked Jean, turning to his mother.

"Nothing—I do not know," she replied hesitatingly.

“Will you come and call on Mme. Rosémilly with me?”

“Why yes — certainly,”

“You know — it is indispensable that I should go to-day,” he said.

“Yes — yes — that is true,” she said.

“Why is it indispensable?” asked old Roland, who never did understand what was said before him.

“Because I have promised her to go.”

“Ah! very well. That is different, then.”

And he proceeded to fill his pipe, while mother and son went up-stairs to put on their hats.

“Will you take my arm, mamma?” asked Jean, when they reached the street.

Although this was an unusual offer on his part, she accepted and leaned on him. They then went on in silence for awhile, then Jean said:

“You see that Pierre is perfectly willing to go.”

“Poor boy!” she murmured.

“Why do you say ‘poor boy?’ He will be quite happy on the *Lorraine*.”

“I know it, but I am thinking of many things.”

She walked on by his side in silence, for a long time lost in thought, then, suddenly raising her head, she said, in that odd tone we sometimes assume to conclude a long and secret reflection:

“What a cruel thing life is. If we ever find a little happiness in it, we are guilty in abandoning ourselves to it, and we pay for it dearly later on.”

“Do not speak of it any more, mamma,” he whispered.

“How is it possible? I think of it always.”

“You will forget it.”

She was again silent, then, in a tone of profound regret, exclaimed:

“Ah! how happy I might have been, if I had married another man!”

At present she was exasperated against Roland. She threw the whole responsi-

bility of her fault and of her unhappiness, on his homeliness, his stupidity, his awkwardness, the dullness of his intellect, and on his common-place appearance. It was owing to all this, to the vulgarity of this man, that she had deceived him, that she had driven one of her sons to despair, and that she had been forced to make to the other the most painful confession that can bleed the heart of a mother.

“How dreadful for a young girl to marry a husband like mine,” she murmured.

Jean did not reply. He was thinking of the man whom until now he had believed to be his father, and perhaps the confused notion he had for a long time had of the paternal mediocrity, the constant irony of his brother, the disdainful indifference of others, and even the contempt of the servant for Roland had prepared his heart for his mother's terrible avowal. Thus it was less painful to be the son of another; and after the great

shock of emotion of the night before, if he did not feel the revolt, the indignation, and the anger which Mme. Roland had feared, it was because he had long suffered unconsciously from being the son of this stupid dolt.

They had now reached Mme. Rosémilly's house. She occupied the second floor of a large house that she owned on the road to Sainte-Adresse. Her windows overlooked the whole harbor of Havre.

When she perceived Madame Roland, who was first to enter, instead of extending her hand as usual, she opened her arms and kissed her affectionately, for she guessed the intention of this visit.

The furniture of the parlor, which was of brocaded velvet, was always carefully covered. On the walls, hung with flowered paper, were four engravings bought by her first husband, the Captain. They represented maritime and sentimental scenes. The first was a fisherman's wife waving her handkerchief from the cliff,

while the sail that bore her husband away was disappearing in the horizon.

The second represented the same woman kneeling on the same cliff, her arms raised to the sky full of lightning, and looking out on a sea of impossible waves in which her husband's bark was about to founder.

The other two engravings represented analogous scenes of a superior class of society.

A young, fair woman dreaming with her elbow on the rail of a large steamship that was sailing away. She was looking at the already distant shore with eyes that were wet with tears and regret.

Whom has she left behind her?

Then, the same young woman seated in an arm-chair near a window overlooking the sea, had fainted away. A letter had fallen from her lap to the carpet.

He is then dead, what despair!

The visitors were generally moved and

charmed by the common-place melancholy of these transparent and poetic subjects. They understood them at once, without explanation and without search; and they pitied the poor woman, although they did not quite know or understand the nature of the grief of the most distinguished. But even this doubt added to their interest. She must have lost her *fiancé*! On entering this room, the eye was invariably attracted by these four subjects, and retained as if fascinated. It wandered away only to return again and again to contemplate the four expressions of these two women who resembled each other like two sisters. The clear, well-finished outline, with its air of distinction of a fashionable engraving, as well as its highly polished frame, gave an impression of neatness and order that was still more accentuated by the rest of the furniture.

The chairs were always ranged in an invariable order, some against the walls,

others around the parlor table. The immaculate curtains had folds that were so straight and regular, that they inspired one with the desire of crumpling them; and never was a grain of dust seen to tarnish the glided clock of the empire style, or the globe of the world supported by Atlas kneeling—seeming to be ripening like a hot-house melon.

On seating themselves, the two ladies disarranged the chairs somewhat out of their normal positions.

“Have you not been out to-day?” asked Mme. Roland.

“No, I must admit that I am somewhat tired,” replied Mme. Rosémilly, and then, as if to thank Jean and his mother, she went on to recall all the pleasure of the fishing excursion.

“Do you know,” she added, “that this morning I ate my prawns, and they were delicious. If you wish, some day or other, we shall recommence this”—

“Before we undertake a second excur-

sion," interrupted the young man, "suppose we terminate the first."

"Why, how?" asked the young woman, "I thought that one was all over."

"Oh! Madam, I also a captured a fish on the rocks of Saint Jouin that I wish to take home with me."

"You? What was it?" she said, archly. "What did you catch there?"

"A wife! And mamma and I have come this morning to ask you if she has changed her mind."

"No, monsieur, I never change my mind," she said, smiling.

He then extended his hand, and she placed hers within it with a quick and resolute gesture.

"It will be as soon as possible, will it not?" he asked.

"Whenever you wish," she replied, simply.

"In six weeks?"

"I have no opinion. What does my future mother-in-law think?"

“Oh! I have nothing to say,” she replied, with a melancholy smile. “I have only to thank you for accepting Jean, as I know you will make him very happy.”

“We shall do what we can, mamma.”

A little moved for the first time, Mme. Rosémilly arose, and, throwing her arms around Mme. Roland, embraced her like a child; and, under this new caress, a strong emotion swelled the bruised heart of the poor woman. She could not have expressed what she felt. It was sad and sweet at the same time. She had lost a son and found a daughter.

When they were again seated, face to face, they took each other's hands, looking and smiling affectionately at each other, while Jean seemed almost forgotten by both.

They then spoke of many things, discussing the details of the approaching marriage, and when all had been satisfactorily decided and settled, Mme. Rosé-

milly suddenly remembered one forgotten detail.

“You have consulted M. Roland, have you not?” she asked.

The mother and son both blushed suddenly, while the former replied: “Oh, no; it is not necessary.”

She then hesitated, feeling that an explanation was necessary, and rejoined:

“We do everything without consulting him. It is enough to let him know what we have decided.”

Madame Rosémilly smiled, without evincing any surprise, considering it only natural, as the old man counted for little in all their plans.

“Suppose we go to your apartments. I would like to rest,” said Mme. Roland to Jean as they went out again.

She felt as if she were without shelter and without refuge, having a horror of her own home.

As she felt the door close behind her, she gave a deep sigh of relief, as if this

lock assured her safety; then, instead of resting, as she had said, she proceeded to open the closets and count the linen, handkerchiefs and stockings. She changed the established order, trying to find more harmonious arrangements that would be more pleasing to the eye of a careful housekeeper; and when she had disposed of everything to her taste, piled the towels, the drawers and shirts on their special shelves, divided the linen into three principal classes: body linen, house linen and table linen, she stepped back to contemplate her work and called Jean.

“Jean, come and see how pretty it looks!” she said.

He arose and admired it to please her. Then when he returned to his chair, she approached behind him with stealthy step and suddenly placing her right arm about his neck she kissed him, while she deposited a small object, wrapped in white paper, on the chimney with the other hand.

“What is that?” he asked.

She made no reply, but recognizing the form of the frame, he understood.

“Give it to me!” he said.

But she feigned to not have heard and returned to the wardrobe. He arose and snatching up the painful relic, he crossed the room and placed it in a drawer of his desk which he double locked.

“Now,” she said, in a trembling voice, while she furtively wiped a tear from her eye, “I shall go and see if your new servant keeps your kitchen in proper order. As she happens to be out just now I can inspect it at my leisure.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE letters of recommendation from Professors Mas-Roussel, Rémusot, Flache and Borriquel, speaking in the most flattering terms of their pupil, Dr. Pierre Roland, had been submitted to the board of directors of the Transatlantic Company, supported by Messrs Poulin, judge of the Tribunal of Commerce, Lenient, big ship owner, and Marrival, auxiliary of the mayor of Havre, a particular friend of Captain Beausire.

It happened that the surgeon of the *Lorraine* had not yet been designated, and Pierre had the good fortune of receiving the appointment in a few days.

The letter notifying him of his appointment was brought to him one morning by the servant Josephine, as he was finishing his toilet.

His first emotion was like that of a condemned man, who receives the announcement of a commutation of his sentence ; and he immediately felt soothed by the thought of his departure, and of the calm wandering life, always rocking on the billowy waters, always fleeing.

He was now living under the paternal roof as a dumb and reserved stranger. Since the night when the infamous secret he had discovered escaped his lips before his brother, he felt that he had broken the last links that existed between his family and himself. He was harassed by remorse for having revealed this thing to Jean. Though he considered himself odious, indecent and wicked, he, nevertheless, felt relieved to have spoken.

He now never met the gaze of his mother or of his brother. Their eyes, to avoid each other, had assumed a surprising mobility, and the ruses of enemies who fear to meet each other. He still asked himself continually: “ What could

she have told Jean? Has she admitted or denied it? What does he think of her; what does he think of me?" He could not guess, and it exasperated him. Moreover, he never spoke to them now, save in the presence of Roland, so as to avoid his questions.

As soon as he had received his letter of appointment, he presented it to his family. His father, who had a great tendency to rejoice at everything, clapped his hands, and Jean, though his heart was full of joy, said in a serious tone:

"I congratulate you with all my heart, for I know there were a great many competitors. You undoubtedly owe your success to your professors' letters."

And his mother lowered her head, and murmured: "I am very happy to know you have succeeded."

After breakfast he hastened to the company's office to ask information on a thousand subjects; and he inquired the name of the surgeon on the *Picardie*,

which was to sail next day, that he might ascertain from him the details of his new life, and the difficulties he might encounter.

Learning that Dr. Pirette was on board he proceeded at once to the *Picardie*, and was received in a small room of the ship by a young man with a blonde beard, who resembled his brother, and with whom he had a long conversation.

From the sonorous depths of the immense ship, a confused and incessant agitation could be heard, in which the falling of the merchandise being loaded in the hold, mingled with the sounds of footsteps, voices, the movement of the derricks lifting the cases, the whistles of the quartermasters, and the rumbling of chains dragged on deck or wound around the capstan by the hoarse breath of steam, causing a slight vibration of the entire body of the big ship.

But when Pierre had left his colleague, and found himself once more in the street,

a new sadness came over him, and enveloped him like those mists that float over the sea, coming from the other end of the world, and carrying in their impenetrable thickness something of the mysterious, and of the impure, like the pestilent breath of malignant and distant lands.

In his hours of greatest suffering he had never felt plunged in such a pool of misery. The last link had been broken; nothing now held him. In tearing from his heart the roots of all his affections, he had not yet experienced this distress of a lost dog, which had suddenly seized him.

It was no longer a moral and torturing pain, but the terror of a beast without shelter, the material anguish of the wanderer without a home, whom the rain, wind, storms, all the brutal forces of the world, are about to assail. As he had stepped on board the ship; as he entered that little chamber balanced on the waves,

the flesh of the man who had always slept in a motionless and tranquil bed, revolted against the insecurity of all the future to-morrows. Until then that flesh had felt protected by the solid walls sunk into the firm earth, and by the certainty of repose in the same place, under the roof that resists the wind. Now, all that we love to brave in the warmth of a sheltering home would become a danger, and a constant suffering.

No more soil under the feet, but the sea that rolls, that roars and ingulfs. No more space, to walk, to run, to lose one's self in the roads, but only a few metres of boards on which to walk like a condemned among other prisoners. No trees or gardens, no streets or houses, nothing but water and clouds, and the ceaseless motion of the ship under his feet. On stormy days he should be forced to lean against the walls, hold on to swinging door, to clutch the edge of his narrow bed to prevent himself from

rolling to the floor. On calm days he would hear the grinding trepidations of the screw and feel the rapid movement of the ship bearing him away in its continual, regular and exasperating flight.

And he was condemned to this life of a vagabond galley-slave, solely because his mother had abandoned herself to the caresses of a man.

He walked on, overwhelmed by the desolate melancholy of people leaving their beloved country.

He no longer felt in his heart that haughty scorn, that disdainful hatred for the people he passed by, but a melancholy desire to speak to them, to tell them that he was leaving France, to be listened to and consoled. It was the shameful need of the poor who extends his hand, a timid and strong need of feeling that some one suffered at his departure.

The thought of Marowsko came to him. The old Pole was the only one

who loved him enough to feel a true and poignant emotion; and the doctor decided at once to go to him.

When he entered the shop the old chemist, who was crushing powders in a marble mortar, gave a little start, and left his work.

“We never see you now,” he said, reproachfully.

The young man explained that he had been very busy, without, however, divulging the motive of his occupation, and, seating himself, he asked:

“Well, how is business getting on?”

Business was very bad. The competition was terrible, the patients scarce and poor in this working-men’s quarter. Only cheap medicines could be sold, and the physicians never ordered those rare and complicated remedies on which one could make five hundred per cent.

“If this lasts much longer,” he concluded, “I will have to close the shop. If I were not counting on you, my dear

doctor, I should have been blacking boots long ago."

Pierre felt a tightening at the heart, and decided to strike the blow at once, since he must.

"Oh! me — me," he said, hesitatingly, "I can be of no use to you. I leave Havre at the commencement of next month."

Marowsko removed his glasses, so great was his emotion.

"You — you —" he murmured, "what are you saying?"

"I say that I am going away, my poor friend."

The old man was stunned, feeling that his last hope was gone, and he suddenly revolted against this man whom he had followed and loved, in whom he had placed so much confidence and who was now abandoning him.

"What! are you also going to deceive me in your turn?" he stammered.

Pierre felt so much moved, that he

felt a desire to embrace him, and rejoined:

“But I have not deceived you. I could find no opening here and I am going as surgeon on a transatlantic steamer.”

“Oh! Monsieur Pierre! you have so often promised to help me in making a living,” he cried, reproachfully.

“What can I do?” rejoined Pierre, “I must make my own living. I have not a cent in the world.”

But Marowsko repeated:

“It is wrong, it is wrong, you should not do it. There is nothing left for me but starvation. At my age, it is all over. It is wrong. You are deserting an old man, who followed you here to be near you. It is wrong.”

Pierre tried to explain, protesting, giving his reasons to prove that he could not do otherwise; but the Pole, indignant at this desertion, would not listen and ended by saying, alluding, no doubt, to some political event:

"You Frenchmen never keep your promises."

Pierre arose, hurt in his turn and said haughtily:

"You are unjust, Père Marowsko. It required powerful motives to drive me to such a course; and you should understand it. Good-by! I hope to find you more reasonable on my return."

"There," said he when he reached the street, "no one will feel a sincere regret for me."

He searched his memory, thinking in turn of all whom he knew or had known; and in the midst of all those faces defiling through his memory, was that of the barmaid, who had first made him suspect his mother.

He hesitated, still feeling an instinctive grudge against her, then suddenly he said to himself: "After all she was right," and he turned into the street that led to the café.

The café happened to be full of people

and also full of smoke; it being a holiday. The customers — shop-keepers and working-men — were calling, laughing, shouting, and the proprietor himself was helping the waiters, running from table to table, carrying away empty glasses and bringing them back full of froth.

When Pierre had found a place, not far from the counter, he waited, hoping the waitress would see him and recognize him.

But she passed and repassed before him without as much as a glance, trotting by with a disdainful swish of her petticoats.

Finally he rapped on the table with a piece of silver, and she came in his direction.

“What will you have, monsieur?” she said, without looking at him, apparently lost in the calculation of the glasses served.

“Well,” said he, “is that the way you greet your friends?”

She fixed her eyes on him, and in a hurried voice said: "Ah! it is you. How are you? But I have no time to spare, to-day. A bock, did you say?"

"Yes, a bock," he repeated.

"I came to say 'good-by,'" he said, when she brought the glass. "I am going away."

"Ah! indeed! where are you going?" she asked, indifferently.

"To America."

"They say it is a beautiful country."

And she said nothing more. Truly he had chosen a bad time to speak to her. There were too many people there to-day.

And Pierre went off toward the harbor. As he reached the pier he saw the *Perle* coming in with his father and Captain Beausire on board. The sailor Papagris was rowing, and the two men, seated in the stern, were smoking their pipes with an air of perfect happiness. As they passed him the young doctor thought: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

And he seated himself on one of the benches of the breakwater, trying to numb his pain in a brutal somnolence.

When he entered the house that night his mother said, without daring to raise her eyes to his:

“You will require a lot of things for your departure, and I scarcely know what is needed. I have ordered some underwear and clothes from the tailor’s, but you, no doubt, need other things that I probably know nothing about.”

He was opening his lips to say: “No, I want nothing,” but he reflected that he must accept enough at least to dress decently, and he replied, quietly; “I scarcely know myself yet, but will inquire at the company’s office.”

He did inquire, and was given a list of indispensable objects. His mother, as she received it from his hands, looked at him for the first time since many days, and in her eyes was that humble, soft, sad and

supplicating expression of the poor beaten dog asking for mercy.

On the 1st of October the *Lorraine* came from Saint-Nazaire into the port of Havre, to leave again on the 7th of the same month for New York; and Pierre Roland took possession of his little floating cabin, in which henceforth he would be imprisoned.

The next day, as he was going out, he met his mother, who was waiting for him on the stairs, and she murmured in an almost inaudible voice:

“May I help you to fix up your cabin?”

“No, thank you, it is all done.”

“I should so much like to see your little room.”

“It is not worth while. It is very plain and very small.”

He passed on, leaving her stunned and pale; leaning against the wall for support.

But Roland, who visited the *Lorraine* on that very day, talked of nothing but



the magnificent steamer during dinner, and was much astonished because his wife evinced no desire to see it, since their son was to sail on her.

Pierre saw but little of his family during the days that followed. He was nervous, irritable, harsh, and his brutal words seemed to lash everybody. But the evening before his departure he appeared suddenly changed and softened. He was going to sleep on board, for the first time, that night, and as he kissed his parents, he asked:

“Will you come and bid me farewell on the ship, to-morrow?”

“Why, yes, of course. Won’t we, Louise?” cried old Roland.

“Yes, certainly,” she said in a low voice.

“We sail at eleven o’clock, precisely,” rejoined Pierre.

“You must be there at half-past nine at the latest.”

“There! I have an idea,” exclaimed his

father. "On leaving you we shall embark on the *Perle* and wait for you outside the harbor and see you once more. Won't we, Louise?"

"Yes, certainly," she repeated.

"By that means," rejoined Roland, "you will not confound us with the crowd that encumbers the quay to see a transatlantic set sail. You can never recognize your own friends in that crowd. Will that suit you?"

"Why, yes, that suits me. It is understood, then."

One hour later, Pierre was stretched in his berth, long and narrow as a coffin. He remained for a long time with his eyes open, thinking of all that had passed during the last two months in his life, and especially in his soul. By dint of suffering himself, and causing others to suffer, his aggressive and revengeful pain had worn itself out, like a spent wave. He scarcely had enough courage left to bear ill-will to any one or anything, and he

allowed his indignation to go with the stream, like his existence. He was so weary of struggling, weary of striking, weary of detesting, weary of everything, that he could do no more, and tried to benumb his heart in forgetfulness, as we fall into a slumber. He vaguely heard around him the new noises of the ship, slight and almost imperceptible in this calm night in port; and in his wound, hitherto so cruel, he now only felt the painful throbbings of a healing wound.

He was sleeping profoundly when the movements of the sailors aroused him from his rest. It was daylight, and the tidal train was just arriving at the quay, carrying the passengers from Paris.

He then wandered through the ship, among the busy and hurrying passengers, searching for their state-rooms, calling to each other, questioning and responding at hazard in the bustle of departure. After he had saluted the captain, and pressed the hand of his companion, the

purser, he entered the cabin where several Englishmen were already dozing. This was a large room, with its walls of white marble, framed by gilded rods, prolonged indefinitely in the mirrors, the perspective of its long tables, flanked by two unlimited rows of revolving chairs in garnet velvet. It was indeed a vast floating cosmopolitan hall, in which the rich people of all the continents were to eat in common. Its opulent luxury was that of the grand hotels, the theaters, the public halls; that imposing and commonplace luxury that pleases the eye of millionaires. The doctor was about to enter that part of the ship reserved for second-class passengers, when he recollected that a large number of emigrants had embarked the previous evening, and he descended to the steerage. On entering, he was greeted by the nauseating odor of poor and unclean humanity — the stench of nude skin more repugnant than that of the hair and wool of the animal. In a

kind of obscure and low tunnel, like the gallery in a mine, he saw hundreds of men, women and children stretched on boards, arranged in tiers one above the other, or huddled together in a mass on the floor. He could not distinguish the faces, but saw in a vague way this sordid and ragged crowd; a miserable mob of wretches, exhausted, crushed and conquered by life, leaving home, with an emaciated wife and extenuated children, for an unknown land where they hoped to escape starvation.

And reflecting on their past exertions, their lost labors, their sterile efforts, the frantic struggle renewed each day in vain, of the energy wasted by these wretches who were to recommence again, without knowing where, that existence of abominable misery, the young doctor felt like crying out to them: "Why not cast yourself into the sea with your females and your young!" And his heart was so touched by pity that he could bear the sight no longer.

He found his father and mother, with his brother and Mme. Rosémilly, awaiting him in his cabin.

“You are early!” he said.

“Yes,” replied his mother, in a trembling voice, “we wished to have time to see you a little while.”

He looked at her. She was in black, as if in mourning for some one, and he now perceived for the first time that her hair, still gray a month ago, was quite white.

It was with difficulties that he succeeded in seating these four visitors in his little home, while he jumped on the bed. Through the open door could be seen the crowd walking to and fro, for all the friends of the passengers, besides an army of curious people, had invaded the immense ship. They promenaded through the passages, in the cabins, everywhere, and some even thrust their heads into the room, while voices outside murmured: “This is the surgeon’s room.”

Pierre pushed the door; but as soon as he found himself alone with his friends, he felt a desire to reopen it, for the agitation without concealed their embarrassment and silence.

Finally Madame Rosémilly broke the silence.

“There is very little air through those little windows,” she said.

“It is a dead-light,” replied Pierre.

He then showed them the thickness of the glass, which rendered it capable of resisting the most violent shocks; he also explained at length the closing system.

“You even have your medicine in here!” said old Roland.

The doctor opened a locker and displayed a collection of bottles, each bearing a Latin name on a small square of white paper.

He took up one to enumerate the properties of its contents, then a second, then a third, and he went through a regu-

lar course of therapeutics, which was listened to with great attention.

"How interesting!" exclaimed Roland, shaking his head.

A soft knock was heard at the door.

"Come in!" cried Pierre.

Captain Beausire entered and extended his hand, saying, "I came late that I might not disturb your leave-taking."

He was also obliged to seat himself on the bed, and the silence was resumed.

But, suddenly, the sound of voices giving orders was heard through the partition, and the captain bent forward to listen.

"It is time for us to go," he announced, "if we wish to embark on the *Perle* in time to see you leave the harbor, and bid you farewell on the sea."

Old Roland was particularly anxious to carry out this programme, with a view, no doubt, of impressing the passengers of the *Lorraine*, and he arose, hurriedly.

"Well, good-by, my son," he said,

kissing Pierre's cheeks, and opening the door.

Mme. Roland, who was very pale, did not move, and remained with her eyes cast down.

"Come, hurry up, we have not a moment to lose," said her husband, touching her arm.

She arose, took a step toward her son, and offered him two cheeks, as cold and white as wax, which he kissed without a word. Then he pressed the hand of Mme. Rosémilly, and that of his brother.

"When is your marriage to take place?" he asked.

"I do not know just when," replied Jean. "We will make it coincide with one of your voyages."

They then ascended to the deck, which was encumbered with sight-seers, porters with bundles, and sailors.

The steam was roaring in the bowels of this enormous ship, which seemed to tremble with impatience.

“Farewell!” cried Roland, hurriedly.

“Farewell!” responded Pierre, as he stood at the gangway that connected the *Lorraine* with the quay.

He again pressed the hands of all, and the family hastened away.

“Quick, quick, into the carriage!” cried Roland.

A cab awaited to convey them to the end of the pier where Papagris had the *Perle* ready to set off at once.

There was not a breath of wind stirring; it was one of those calm, dry days of autumn, when the polished surface of the sea seems cold and hard as steel.

Jean seized an oar, the sailor took the other and they glided away. On the breakwater, the jetties, even on the granite parapet, an immense crowd, moving and noisy, awaited the *Lorraine*.

The *Perle* passed between these two waves of humanity, and was soon out of the harbor.

“We shall be right in their route,

you'll see, just exactly," remarked Beausire, who was seated between the two ladies, holding the rudder.

The two rowers were pulling with all their strength, so as to be out as far as possible. Suddenly, old Roland cried out:

"There she is, I see her masts and two chimneys. She is coming out of the basin."

"Bend to it, boys!" cried Beausire.

Mme. Roland took out her handkerchief and placed it over her eyes.

Roland, who was standing up holding on to the mast, announced:

"She is just turning into the outer harbor — She is not budging — There she goes again — She had to take a tug — She is coming — bravo! — She is between the jetties! — Don't you hear the crowd shouting — Bravo! — The *Neptune* is towing her — I see her hull now — Here she comes, here she is — Heavens, what a ship! Whew! look at her! —"

Madame Rosémilly and Beausire turned; the two men ceased to row; Mme. Roland, alone, did not move.

The immense steamer, towed by a powerful tug that looked like a caterpillar in front of her, came slowly and majestically out of the harbor. And the people of Havre crowded on the piers, the beach, and in the windows, suddenly carried away by a patriotic impulse, shouted: "*Vive la Lorraine!*" acclaiming and applauding this magnificent departure, this child-birth of a great maritime city, giving to the ocean her most beautiful daughter.

But "She," as soon as she had cleared the narrow passage inclosed between the two granite walls, feeling free at last, abandoned her tug, and glided away alone, like an enormous monster wandering on the water.

"Here she is — here she is!" — old Roland still cried. "And she is making directly for us."

And Beausire, radiant with delight, kept repeating: "What did I promise you, eh! Don't I know their route?"

"Look, she is approaching!" whispered Jean to his mother.

And Mme. Roland uncovered her eyes, blinded with tears.

As soon as she had cleared the harbor, the *Lorraine* advanced at full speed. It was a clear, calm day, and Beausire, with his glass fixed on her, announced:

"Look there! M. Pierre is standing alone at the stern, in full view. Attention!"

High as a mountain and swift as a train, the ship now passed, almost touching the *Perle*.

And Mme Roland, wild with despair, extended her arms toward him; and she saw her son, her son Pierre, with a gold-laced cap on his head, throwing her farewell kisses with both hands.

But he was gliding away, he was flying, disappearing, already becoming so small,

vanishing like an imperceptible spot on the gigantic ship. She made one effort to see him again, and then could distinguish him no more.

"You saw him," said Jean, taking her hand.

"Yes, I saw him. How kind he is." And they turned toward the city.

"Mercy! how fast it goes," declared Roland, with enthusiastic conviction.

The ship, in fact, was diminishing second by second, as if melting into the ocean. Mme. Roland turned and watched him vanishing in the horizon, toward an unknown land, at the other end of the world. On that ship that nothing could now stop, on that ship that she soon would no longer see, was her son, her poor boy. And it seemed as if half her heart went with him, as if her life was ended, for it seemed as if she would never see her child again.

"Why do you cry?" asked her husband, "he will be back in less than a month."

"I do not know," she sobbed. "I weep because I am ill."

"When they reached the shore, Beau-sire left them at once, as he was to breakfast with a friend, and Jean and Mme. Rosémilly went on ahead.

"Our Jean is a mighty well-built man, all the same," declared Roland to his wife.

"Yes," she replied, and being too much overcome to think of what she was saying, she added: "I am very glad that he is going to marry Madame Rosémilly."

"Ah! bah! What! He is going to marry Madame Rosémilly?" he exclaimed, astounded.

"Why, yes. We intended to ask your consent this very day."

"Well! I declare. Has this thing been going on long?" he asked, amazed.

"Oh! no, only a few days, Jean wanted to make sure he would be accepted before consulting you."

"Very well! very well!" cried the old

man, rubbing his hand. "It has my entire approval."

As they left the quay and took the Boulevard François I., his wife turned once more to cast a last look at the high sea; but she saw nothing but a small gray cloud of smoke, so distant and so slight that it seemed like mist.

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